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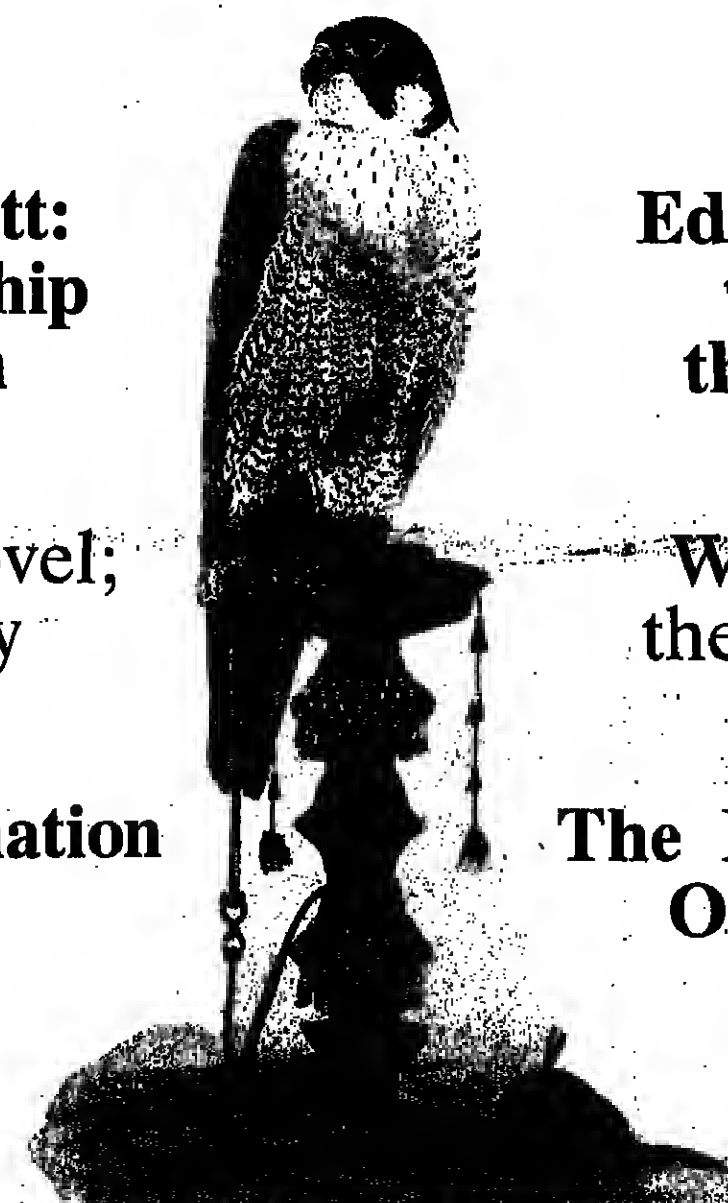
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the Middle East

The Arab novel;
Sufi poetry

Women in Islam;
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'The Transformation
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The Battle of Lepanto;
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"Haggard peregrine", one of Mary-Claire Critchley-Salmonson's illustrations in colour for Mark Allen's *Falconry in Arabia* (143 pp., Oph. £13.95, 0 85013 018 3).

S. S. Prawer: the autobiography of George Grosz

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The champion of the Crescent

John Hackett

MALCOLM CAMERON LYONS and D.E.P. JACKSON

Saladin: The Politics of the Holy War 456pp. Cambridge University Press. £25. 0521 22358 X

Of all the outstanding figures in the history of the Crusades neither Zangi nor Nuraddin, none of the shadowy Caliphs, nor any of the Latin kings, princes or counts, none of the numberless emirs, not even Richard the Lionheart of England or St Louis of France, let alone Philip Augustus or Frederick Barbarossa himself, has attracted as much interest and attention as Al-Malik an-Nasir as-Sultan Salah-ad-Din Yusuf ibn Ayyub, a man honoured, in the widely used westernized version of his name, as "Saladin". He has been much misunderstood and is probably not rightly understood even now. *Saladin: The Politics of the Holy War* (which includes eight maps, an index, admirable notes and a rich bibliography) makes a notable contribution to a fuller comprehension of one of the most remarkable figures of the Middle Ages. It is certainly the best book yet written about him in English.

Saladin was both by birth and standing in Islam no more than a middle-grade emir, respected and followed by others largely because he was more successful than they were. He was able, more clear-sighted, more astute. The great of favourable terms to a beleaguered garrison might suggest generosity. It could also secure early possession of an important place and permit prompt further movement towards others. He was unwise to leave Tyre in Frankish hands in 1187, after the overthrow of the Latin Kingdom, giving Conrad of Montferrat a bridgehead of immense value in the Third Crusade. His swift movement through the Frankish fortresses of the north, however, mostly secured quickly by generous terms to their garrisons, removed bases invaluable to the sort of land expedition expected under Barbarossa. If he had foreseen that the main thrust of the Frankish relief expeditions would be seaborne, beyond the power even of his strengthened Egyptian navy to stem, Saladin would have acted differently over Tyre. His judgment was not always faultless. But he was of a

generous and personally unselfish disposition and well aware that honesty was good policy. He also knew that compassion, to which he was not disinclined when circumstances allowed his indulgence, could win high praise. When in 1176 he had secured the key fortress of A'zaz and thus separated his Nurid opponents in Aleppo from their allies in Mosul, Nuraddin's little daughter came and asked for the castle back. He readily gave it to her, with generous and honourable treatment. (A'zaz, any way, was too far north for him to garrison effectively and its retrocession had already been covered by treaty.) Abu Shanab, however, records that when he was preparing the downfall of the Fatimid Caliphate in Egypt in the spring of 1174, daily cruelties bore witness to a ruthless cruelty, and even a vindictiveness, which is difficult to reconcile with the opinions held of him by romantic admirers and his apparent opinion of himself. Later on in the same year, Christian prisoners in bonds were sent around cities to be slain as a public spectacle. Islamic divines were often invited to take a hand. Onlookers sometimes mocked their malodorousness and more expert executioners took over. Saladin is reported by 'Imad-ad-Din, his chief biographer and devoted partisan, to have watched such doings with quiet satisfaction.

What did Saladin seek? He used Egypt as a base to secure Syria, and Syria as a base to expand into the Jezirah. It can hardly be accepted any longer that he formed a power base only to eject the Frankish unbelievers from Jerusalem and destroy the Christian presence in the Levant. His strict Qur'anic upbringing and his devotion to Islam are not in question, but there is room for doubt on the degree to which his life was dominated by them. Until he was thirty-one years old he lived a worldly life, one in which wine played a part. He never made the pilgrimage to Mecca, as his father Ayyub did in 1157. His concern for the recovery of Jerusalem from the unbeliever was clearly deep and genuine, but the contribution this would make to his own prestige was not unimportant, while undying hostility to the Trinitarian infidel is not easy to reconcile with the political flexibility which marked his dealings with the Franks. Religious zeal may not have been exclusively a cloak for expansionist policies, but it was certainly useful.

The good will of the Caliphate was more than useful. It was vital. Malcolm Cameron Lyons and D.E.P. Jackson's rich, but previously little used, source material offers abundant evidence of the care Saladin took to emphasize his subordination to the Commander of the Faithful. Coolness on the part of the Caliph, however, was hardly surprising. Saladin's destruction in 1171 of the Fatimid Caliphate in Egypt gave satisfaction in Baghdad but also carried a warning. Nuraddin's opportune death in 1174, when he was clearly restless about the growth of Ayyubid power, gave Saladin his big opportunity. He used the power base he had established as Vizier in Egypt to challenge and finally overcome Nurid dominance in Syria. The next step was extension of power eastwards. The Caliphate had been reluctant to grant Saladin diplomas confirming tenure of holdings (such as Aleppo) taken from the heirs of Nuraddin. There was even greater reluctance to legitimize expansion eastwards into the Jezirah. Mosul remained staunchly pro-Zengid until the agreement of 1186, and the not unreasonable suspicion that Ayyubid power contained an implicit threat to the Abbasid Caliphate never completely abated. Whatever Saladin's ultimate purpose, he was clearly pursuing a policy of dynastic expansionism.

In England Sir Walter Scott's *The Talisman*, published in 1825, set a trend in the romanticization of Saladin which Lane Poole's high standard of scholarship left him writing three-quarters of a century later, curiously unable to correct. In other lands more closely connected with the medieval Middle East a tendency was already noticeable to create out of Saladin a figure more chivalrous, generous, honest and good than seemed possible for a successful leader in the circumstances of his time. Between two of the truly outstanding opponents in the twelfth-century Levant, Saladin and Richard the Lionheart of England, there was a high regard on both sides which gave some grounds for Western romanticism. Contemporary sources, however, can be interpreted rather differently. The literary talents of 'Imad-ad-Din of Isfahan and Baha ad-Din nsh-Shaddad, two of the major sources for any biography of Saladin, are applied to a glorification of their master. Ibn al-Athir, writing with some sympathy for the Zengid cause, is often by

implication, and sometimes quite explicitly, more critical.

Western colonization in the Levant would scarcely have been conceivable without a degree of local fragmentation and disorder which at that time almost amounted to anarchy. To the Sunni Ayyubid Caliphate in Baghdad stood opposed a Shi'ite Fatimid Caliphate in Cairo. The Arab rulers in northern areas of the Fertile Crescent tended to acknowledge the authority of the first. In the South, particularly in those parts of Southern Syria contiguous to Egypt which we have in the past known as Palestine, sovereignty largely lay with the second. In the country in between, and to a large extent in those areas themselves, rival emirs jostled for power. The Eastern Roman Empire, once possessor of most of the coast and much of the hinterland, still brooded beyond the Taurus, never unwilling to take a hand once more in the Syrian power game although the Emperor Manuel's crippling defeat at Myriokephalon in 1174 would do little more than confirm a decline evident since Manzikert a hundred years earlier. Armenian neighbours in the North-East could cause trouble. Rivalries between Italian maritime interests - Pisans, Venetians and Genoese, now moving in where Amalfitani were once supreme - caused instability and insecurity in Levantine ports. Bedu from the eastern deserts and Berbers from the Upper Nile brought danger across uncertain borders. Muslims in several varieties and Christians in several more, living in communities cheek by jowl with Jews, with conflicting ancient rights in the Holy City of Jerusalem, made up a hotchpotch under no single stable rule. The establishment of the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem, and the other crusading states at the end of the eleventh century, was in the situation by no means difficult. The Franks only added yet another belligerent and ambitious group to the kaleidoscopic patterns constantly re-forming in the Levant.

The Frankish colonies could last only as long as they were allowed to last, which would be as long as it would take to reconstitute a continuous, coherent, peripheral Muslim entity around them and direct it towards their removal. This, in effect, took up the whole twelfth century. Zangi did the ground-work in the north, his great son, Nuraddin carried it forward nearly to

completion. Saladin, at first Nuraddin's subordinate, and then his rival and successor, rounded off the structure in Egypt to form a power base and applied it in a *phid* to the elimination of the Latin Kingdom, the reconquest of Jerusalem and the reduction of the Frankish presence in the Levant to little more than a token. To regard this as Saladin's single dominant objective, however, would be as great an over-simplification as to see in the holy war no more than a cloak for self-aggrandizement. What can scarcely be doubted is that if Nuraddin, once he had recognized in Saladin's development of the Egyptian vizierate not a source of support but a threat, had not died in 1174, Saladin would hardly have been able to develop and exploit the coherent Muslim periphery under his own unified control in a way which made the downfall of Frankish colonization a certainty.

Seven and a half centuries later a remarkably similar situation developed on the surrender of the British Mandate over Palestine and Transjordan in 1948, when quite strongly established Jewish colonies occupying an area not very different from that of the Latin kingdom were threatened with obliteration by their Arab neighbours. Britain's Chief of the Imperial General Staff, Field Marshal Montgomery, confidently predicted that the Arabs would easily drive the Jews into the sea. A much more obscure British officer, who had done some homework on the twelfth century, was requiring at the same time from Amman that since there was no coherent Arab periphery the Jews would probably be able to do what the Franks did and hang on, which they did. Nasser, with the United Arab Republic, tried to do again what Nuraddin had done, and failed. The Israeli State was able to consolidate and even to expand. The Arab chance had gone and a completely new situation has now emerged. In spite of the wealth of hitherto unexploited source material used by the authors, and for all their carefully defined analysis, Saladin remains a shadowy and enigmatic figure - much more so, for example, than that other Mediterranean giant, the near-contemporary Holy Roman Emperor Frederick II, Stupor Mundi. The very abundance of the source material, welcome though it is, perhaps makes definite delineation more difficult. This book does not come down

A History of Chinese Civilization

JACQUES GERNET
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emphatically either on the side of the romantic vision of Sir Walter Scott, largely endorsed by Lane Poole and finding some support in the magisterial judgment of Sir Hamilton Gibb, nor yet on the frankly critical and not always friendly position of Professor Ehrenkruetz.

Saladin displayed beyond question personal qualities which marked him out as unusual among his peers and attracted wide respect, affection and esteem. He was a courageous fighter and an able field commander - if not in the first class. His capacity as an administrator in both military affairs and civil, though rather less, was amply developed and keenly tested during his formative years with Shirkuh, in Egypt, when he was acting for his uncle the Vizier from 1167 onwards as something like a chief of staff. He never suffered from the obvious, vanity and personal greed which blinded so many rulers of his kind.

Power, in the fragmented, unstable and often cruel world of the medieval Middle East was not won - and kept - by the exercise of chivalry, tolerance and magnanimity. These qualities, when manifested in the seats of power, marked their possessor out for especial regard but the securing and maintenance of power demanded ruthless determination and a driving ambition were essential, while a high capacity for low intrigue was also useful. In the bloodstained jungle of twelfth-century Syria the Saladin of *The Talmud* would hardly have stood a chance.

The present reviewer, as a serving officer, rode and fought with Arab cavalry over much of the ground described in this book. The topographical exactitude displayed by its authors, the care taken over detail which very few readers are in a position to check, the soundness of judgment in matters of time, distance and the impact on events of weather, terrain and the season of the year, are all impressive. It is possible to differ on very small points of nomenclature, for example, or on what is visible from where at certain times of year and day, but the physical background against which the drama unfolds is faithfully represented and the interpretation of military action is generally sound.

Did Saladin use the holy war against the Franks and the sovereign requirements of the Caliphate as a cloak for a dynastic expansionism in which an Ayyubid future was the prime consideration? He pushed westwards from Egypt, threatening the Almohades in the Maghrib, and North-Eastwards as far as Latakia. Did he dream of an empire stretching from the Caucasus to Spain? The whole question of what Saladin was trying to do remains open. There is almost certainly no single answer. The Saladin enquiry has become of recent years a growth industry. This book, whose importance is unlikely to be eclipsed in the near future, opens new veins of material to be explored in its development.

On and off the map

Robert Irwin

WILLIAM C. BRUCE (Editor)
An Historical Atlas of Islam
71pp, London, Brill, 1981, £16.15

Harold Macmillan recently remarked that Afghanistan was "like Clapham Junction. You can go north or you can go south." An examination of the relevant maps in *An Historical Atlas of Islam* only partially confirms the comparison. Ancient tracks converge and diverge according to a complex and uncertain timetable, but most of the through traffic, Arab, Turkish and Mongol, seems to have preferred to go East or West. The atlas aims to cover the Islamic lands - approximately from the Crimea to Java - from approximately the seventh to the early twentieth century. It is a valuable and detailed atlas, superbly illustrated with maps, and a useful reference work. A student of Ottoman history, for example, will find it a most useful reference work.

Don John's day's work

Michael Mallett

JACK BEECHING
The Galleys at Lepanto
267pp, Hutchinson, £10.95, 0199 47920 7

Ever since Fernand Braudel reminded us thirty years ago, in his classic book *La Méditerranée et le monde méditerranéen à l'époque de Philippe II*, of the continued importance of the Mediterranean to both the economic and political life of sixteenth-century Europe, despite the great age of extra-European discovery, there has been something of a revival of interest in the battle of Lepanto. Indeed at the time it was "the greatest day's work seen for centuries" the battle made an immediate and indelible impression on European culture. Celebrated in painting by Tintoretto and Titian, in verse and prose by Hernando de Herrera and Cervantes, in music by Giallucchi, the echoes of the great victory continued to resound. But in many subsequent histories it became an anachronism and an irrelevance; a battle fought in an immense cost, with out-dated weapons, to no apparent purpose; a victory from which vanquished recovered more quickly than victors. Now, however, with the quarter-century behind us, with a renewed interest in sixteenth-century Venice and in Philip II's European policies, and a new awareness of the early impact of cannon on sea warfare inspired by Carlo Cipolla, John Hole and J. F. Guilmartin, we can look afresh at Don John of Austria's achievement on October 7, 1571.

Don John is the hero of Jack Beeching's latest book, but to see *The Galleys at Lepanto* as part of a new historical tradition is a little misleading. None of the more recent historical literature directly on the subject appears in the bibliography, and yet this does not really seem to matter. Beeching has written a splendid piece of popular history which captures the mood of the moment. He combines exciting narrative with highly effective character portraits and sets it all against a background of perceptive and reasonably accurate historical perspective and generalization. This is not just another book about a famous battle, but a panorama of fifty years of sixteenth-century history to which Lepanto forms a logical culmination. The complexities of the Habsburg policy, rising Catholic Reformation fervour, Ottoman imperialism, spiralling inflation and economic tension, and intermittent self-interest are woven together to form the background against which the characters in the final drama are introduced and developed.

These characters are not just the captains who led the great fleets to Lepanto, although they are all provided

with much interesting detail on their previous careers. In addition to Don John himself we meet Gianandrea Doria, the clever and devious Genoese entrepreneur who commanded the right wing of the Christian fleet and who alone among its leaders brought his richly caparisoned flagship through unscathed; Sebastiano Venier, the elderly but fiery Venetian lawyer and veteran sea captain; Marcantonio Colonna, the affable and shrewd Roman noble who led the papal contingent; and even Sir Thomas Stukeley, the English Catholic adventurer whose earlier exploits in Ireland are retold to explain his

presence on the great day. On the Turkish side it is Ochiai, the Cilician fisherman turned Moslem corsair who had assumed the mantle of Barbarossa and Dragut and who alone among the infidel captains managed to survive to fight another day, who catches the eye. But Ali Pasha, son of the muzzio of the Imperial mosque and favourite of the Islamic intrigues, also plays his part.

However, it is the political and religious leaders who moved these pawns that command greater attention; Philip II of Spain, the spider of the Escorial, gloomily weighing up the balance between political



Showing their naval might, in this illustration to an episode from the oriental Alexander romance, the Copper City and its autonomous inhabitants are overrun by the multi-ethnic Persian but well-armed soldiers of Alexander. This legend is one of the many portrayed in *Mythology: An Illustrated Encyclopedia*, edited by Richard Covenish (303pp, Orbis, £16, 0 8513 076 1), a survey of the principal myths of the world.

advantage and religious conviction in his lonely cold outside Madrid; Philip, fanatic reformer and crusader who never understood that balance and had recently excommunicated Queen Elizabeth; Sultan Selim the Sorcerer, a quick victory to justify his unexpected succession to the great Suleiman achieved by his intrigues; and his closest advisers Sokollu, the Grand Vizier, and Joseph Mirza, the "Great Jew" whose personal vendetta against Venice was another piece in the jigsaw. Somewhat inappropriately, St Francis Borgia, the General of the Jesuits, also figures prominently among these actors; but although he part in the events was in fact peripheral, his career as Borgia descendant turned Jesuit ascetic is too good a story to be missed. Through it all strides "Don John himself, acknowledged half-brother to Philip II but the real inheritor of the completed idealism of the Emperor Charles V. At the age of twenty-four he had emerged as the only man who could hold together the disparate forces of the Holy League.

But it is not just the characters who stand out in this pulsating drama. Key events are recorded with a new freshness to fill in the background; the successful defence of Malta in 1565 is here to explain rising Christian enthusiasm and Turkish determination for revenge; the abortive revolt of the Moriscos in 1569 provides Don John with his previous experience of leadership and Philip II with his motive for committing himself, somewhat uncharacteristically, to a major enterprise against the Turks; the Turkish attack on Cyprus and the atrocities committed against Marcantonio Bragadin and his men fuel the resentment of the Venetians and the confidence of the Turks. Then there are the galleys themselves, led, overcrowded social microcosms, but still supremely effective weapons if properly handled. Landed with guns and supported by the great Venetian galleon gunships, they were outdressed not in terms of military effectiveness, but increasingly in terms of economic viability. The costs of this sort of warfare were becoming too great to be maintained by a failing Mediterranean economy.

Of course, it is possible to dispute some of Beeching's emphases, although rarely his facts. His book brooks all the rules of modern historical writing: it reveals in narrative, in anecdote, and in the characterization; it concentrates on high politics; it over-simplifies almost all the recent specialist literature; and yet it will do more to stimulate the historical imagination and enthusiasm of the average reader than all the writings of the *Annalists*. The book is most nearly approaches in intention and method, although not perhaps in subtlety, is Garrett Mattingly's *Defeat of the Spanish Armada*, and that is high praise indeed.

Even if we know only Grosz's graphic work we cannot but be aware of the importance of that written word played in his art. Many of his best-known drawings and paintings include words we have to imagine spoken or sung (ranging from a laconic "k.v." - fit for military service - to a Christmas carol "Stille Nacht, Heilige Nacht") as well as an innumerable instances of the lettering which is so essential a part of our city experience. A glance at the famous "Vision of New York" (1915) reveals, within the space of a few inches, such legends as CHICAGO BEACH HOTEL, GODFREY COMP, SINGAPORE COMPANY, THE BEST IMPORTERS, DENVER, EXOTIC NEW YORK HERALD ORIENTAL, DANZING (sic) COME ON ALONG, JAMES TAYLOR. Add to this Grosz's many experiments with words in more meaningful sequence. In essays, poems, diaries or in occasional surprise that he should eventually have felt the need to supplement his graphic life's work with an autobiography, *Ein kleines Ja und ein grosses Nein* appeared in German in 1955, four years before Grosz's death. It is now made, as the publishers claim, "fully available in English for the first time."

Pity! One only has to open Uwe M. Schöndel's *George Grosz, Der Künstler in seiner Gesellschaft* to find that the sentence from the autobiography with which Schöndel begins his account "Was war er? Ein Gröndel der schwarze-wäse-rolle-Rohrstock" - is correspondingly omitted from the corresponding passage on page 28 of this new English version. Nor is this a trivial omission; for a schoolmaster's cane painted in Germany's national colours seems to have been part of the composition of a painting, now lost which Grosz describes in a later chapter of his autobiography.

GEORGE GROSZ

A Small Yes and a Big No: An Autobiography
Translated by Arnold J. Pomerans
246pp, Allison and Busby, £12.50, 0 85031 455 0

In the second volume of his autobiography Elias Canetti has described how deeply George Grosz's drawings affected him when he first saw them in the early 1920s. Here, he felt, someone had precisely expressed what he himself had experienced during the post-war years: these drawings had a strength and a daring, a ruthlessness and a legitimate dreadfulness, which a compelled admiration. Such works were extreme - but they conveyed a kind of truth that was necessarily absent from an art which mediated, weakened, explained. Grosz's characters, Canetti felt, really existed, more vividly even than their real-life models and originals; and when he visited Berlin in 1928 and met Grosz in person, his trust in the truthfulness of his vision was confirmed. He might feel frightened or threatened by Grosz's latest drawings and water-colours, might even agree with the many critics who found them "obscene" by contemporary standards. But this, Canetti knew, was no snide or artist's true chronicle of what lay behind the "joyous" façade of Berlin's night-life.

Canetti's experience has been shared by many who never knew the Berlin of the 1920s at first hand. The arrogant officers, cowed recruits, academics with Teutonic beards or duelling scars, fat-necked and pot-bellied bourgeois with aggrieved, over-dressed wives, officious policemen, pompous priests scornful of ascetic leanness, pimps and prostitutes, amputees and beggars, working-men and working-women heeded into factories, murderers and suicides - all the characters who confront one another and us in Grosz's brilliantly composed drawings and paintings - have indelibly affected the image most of us have of Germany and times in the twentieth century. What, after all, was Joel Grey in Bob Fosse's *Cabaret* if not a George Grosz drawing sprung to life?

Even if we know only Grosz's graphic work we cannot but be aware of the importance of that written word played in his art. Many of his best-known drawings and paintings include words we have to imagine spoken or sung (ranging from a laconic "k.v." - fit for military service - to a Christmas carol "Stille Nacht, Heilige Nacht") as well as an innumerable instances of the lettering which is so essential a part of our city experience. A glance at the famous "Vision of New York" (1915) reveals, within the space of a few inches, such legends as CHICAGO BEACH HOTEL, GODFREY COMP, SINGAPORE COMPANY, THE BEST IMPORTERS, DENVER, EXOTIC NEW YORK HERALD ORIENTAL, DANZING (sic) COME ON ALONG, JAMES TAYLOR. Add to this Grosz's many experiments with words in more meaningful sequence. In essays, poems, diaries or in occasional surprise that he should eventually have felt the need to supplement his graphic life's work with an autobiography, *Ein kleines Ja und ein grosses Nein* appeared in German in 1955, four years before Grosz's death. It is now made, as the publishers claim, "fully available in English for the first time."

As so often happens in autobiographies, the most memorable passages concern the artist's early years and struggles. Grosz's description of how he came to Grosz, to reproduce what he saw in drawings, cannot but be of great interest to all admirers of his art. He chronicles vividly his boyhood activities in the provincial seclusion of Pomerania and the contrasting bustle of a proletarian district of Berlin; the influence exerted on his vision of the world by the sensational illustrations of penny-dreadfuls, fair-ground paintings, magazines ranging from *Fliegende Bilder* (with its cartoons and humorous "illustrations") to the *Lalpalzer Illustrirte Zeitung* (with its memorable "bath-scenes"); the formative importance of the adventures of Karl May and the picture-stories of Wilhelm Busch; the passion for drawing-teachers within and without academies; and not least - in a chapter entitled "A Glimpse of the Thirteenth Room" - an episode that may have been the origin of the sexual obsessions patent in many of his most compelling works. These early chapters afford us as good an insight as we could hope to find into the making of one particular artist's style and vision. Especially

Glances behind the façade

S. S. Prawer

There are other mysteries about Pomerans' clear and idiomatic translation. Why is the *Proletkult* movement called "Proletkult" on the two occasions on which it is mentioned? The word is neither English nor German, and seems to make the worst of both worlds. What is a "Cinespalat"? Why, in the obligatory Goethe quotation, change Goethe's deliberate and meaningful comparative - "America, du hast es besser" - into a superlative ("America, thou fastest best"? Why is Grosz's Berlin publisher simply called "Wieland" throughout without a hint ever in the index that he was in fact Wieland Herzfelde? What will those not acquainted with Berlinese drinking-habits make of the phrase "a glass of blond with a dash"? Here publishers and translator should have combined to give the reader a little more help.

A particularly attractive feature of *A Small Yes and a Big No* is in the many line-drawings included in the text. Only eight of these are dated, however; and even where there is an explanatory caption, we are never told from which of Grosz's books or portfolios they come. As for the few plates which are included - most of these are all but useless, for one really cannot gain an adequate impression of Grosz's little-known American oils and water-colours from reproductions in black and white. Yet such an impression would seem to be important; for the painter of the later pictures who speaks to us, who looks back from his American vantage-point at the German painter and draughtsman who had produced "Ecce Homo", "The Face of the Ruling Class", "Dedication to Oskar Panizza", "Doom Morries her Pedantic Automaton", "Pillars of Society" some three decades before.

And how utterly, how unexpectedly, different the Grosz of 1955 turns out to be from the Grosz of the twenties! The hate-and-rage-inspired artist who fixed Canetti's imagination can here be found condemning what he calls the "modern habit" of tearing away the veil drawn over the past "the better to show up the ugliness, the cruelty, the chaos and the horror." The man who had so powerfully opposed proletarian suffering to bourgeois oppression and complacency now indulges in constant denigration of "the masses", whose taste in matters artistic is even worse than that of the bourgeoisie and whose stupidity and cruelty are (to say the least) no less virulent. The enthusiastic disciple of Futurism, the pioneer of Berlin Expressionism and Dada now declares, in all seriousness, that the artists whom he most wished to emulate in America were meticulous illustrators like Norman Rockwell. Grosz seems to have regressed, in his later years, to the boy who had drawn and painted nothing so much as the naturalistically painted kitsch of Eduard Gutzberg.

As so often happens in autobiographies, the most memorable passages concern the artist's early years and struggles. Grosz's description of how he came to Grosz, to reproduce what he saw in drawings, cannot but be of great interest to all admirers of his art. He chronicles vividly his boyhood activities in the provincial seclusion of Pomerania and the contrasting bustle of a proletarian district of Berlin; the influence exerted on his vision of the world by the sensational illustrations of penny-dreadfuls, fair-ground paintings, magazines ranging from *Fliegende Bilder* (with its cartoons and humorous "illustrations") to the *Lalpalzer Illustrirte Zeitung* (with its memorable "bath-scenes"); the formative importance of the adventures of Karl May and the picture-stories of Wilhelm Busch; the passion for drawing-teachers within and without academies; and not least - in a chapter entitled "A Glimpse of the Thirteenth Room" - an episode that may have been the origin of the sexual obsessions patent in many of his most compelling works. These early chapters afford us as good an insight as we could hope to find into the making of one particular artist's style and vision. Especially

memorable is Grosz's constant demonstration of the way life seemed to him to conform to caricature. "Many of my teachers," he writes, "were odd characters, ridiculous drill-sergeant figures with barrel-shaped pumches, baggy trousers, collars askew and peculiar pince-nez. They were just like caricatures in pre-war issues of *Simplitissimus*." A hatcher the younger Grosz encountered seemed to him "a figure out of Gustave Doré". When Grosz glimpses the German Republic's Foreign Secretary, Gustav Stresemann, for the first time, he sees him as "the epitome of Germany", as imagined by certain French cartoonists; but we have only to read the more detailed description which follows ("He had the bloated face of the former Corps student turned industrialist - a red-faced man with swollen veins, much too high blood-pressure, and small, bloodshot, puffy eyes") to recognize the vision characteristic of Grosz's own satirical drawings in the 1920s.

A Small Yes and a Big No has some interesting psychological observations on the rich patrons who bought drawings in which they themselves were savagely caricatured and who flocked to hear themselves abused and ridiculed in *The Threepenny Opera* or in Dada demonstrations. "Many rich people," Grosz reflects, "have had a conscience and feel better once a while. Yet such an impression would seem to be important; for the painter of the later pictures who speaks to us, who looks back from his American vantage-point at the German painter and draughtsman who had produced "Ecce Homo", "The Face of the Ruling Class", "Dedication to Oskar Panizza", "Doom Morries her Pedantic Automaton", "Pillars of Society" some three decades before.

It was in the Café Oranienburger Tor that I first listened to something like a jazz band. It was known as the "rakete" and was not a jazz band in the proper sense but more like a Viennese palm-court orchestra that had suddenly gone mad. Two or three members of the band, wailing saws and cowbells, kept interrupting the general melodic line with rhythmic noises of their own while the band leader, known as "Mister Meshugge", carried on like a lunatic. He pretended to be quite out of control, and kept breaking his baton over the poor fiddler over the head with his violin. Then he would seize the double bass and engage it in a grotesque duel; in the end he would fling the broken pieces into the audience, who screamed with delight as they flung them back at him.

Throughout this entire charade, waiters served the band with round after round of beer and schnapper, which helped lift their high spirits even higher. "Mister Meshugge" kept tearing the instruments out of the players' hands, danced, sang, jumped suddenly on to the grand piano and scratched himself like a monkey, grabbed a large glass of beer, pretended to be raising it in a toast to his enthusiastic public and then poured it with utmost dispatch into the trumpet of one of his hapless musicians. The audience, was convulsed with laughter at each new act.

That evening in Oranienburger Tor I did not, of course, have the slightest idea that what I had just seen was a parody of what would one day be a reality, one in which another mad band-leader would conduct a dance of death, snatching instruments from his musicians' hands and belabouring their heads until they collapsed to the ground, until they would far surpass the applause lavished upon his harmless predecessor. The ghastly echoes of those ovations have not yet died away.

There can be few more memorable or more meaningful evocations of a type of entertainment whose later avatars we have all come to know so well.

The early chapters of *A Small Yes and a Big No* are full of similarly vivid passages; but half-way through the book Grosz seems to tire. His portraits of Brecht, Mehring and Tucholsky are disappointingly conventional, giving us nothing we cannot get from a dozen other works. Even his style deteriorates; on occasions it comes to resemble that of the penny-dreadful on which he had nourished his imagination in his early years: "It was", he writes, "as if some hidden power had flung out a poisoned dart at random and that this dart, with unerring instinct and the speed of lightning, had made straight for the person of Hermann Bornholdt Schultz - Leipzig. But let us not anticipate." The chapters describing his years in America, from 1933 until 1954, show nothing of the organizing power of earlier ones: they degenerate into a series of anecdotes, interspersed with distressing anti-modernist and anti-democratic diatribes. Even his recollection of the pictures he had once painted becomes dim after a certain point. Here, for instance, is his recollection of a picture that has now been lost.

My mud was reflected in a large political painting, which I called *Germany: A Winter's Tale*, after the poem by Heinrich Heine. In the centre a good old German burgher, fat and anxious, sat at a rather unsteady little table, on which he had a glass of beer and a newspaper. He was wearing a black hat and a black coat. Underneath I had placed the three pillars of society: Army, Church and School (the schoolmaster holding a black-white-and-red cane). The burgher himself was desperately clutching at his knife

and fork - the world was swaying about him. A sailor as a symbol of revolution and a prostitute completed my view of the times we lived in.

How strange that Grosz should have censored out of this description what even in photographs of the painting concerned seems one of its most striking (and most essential) features: Grosz's self-portrait in profile, clearly visible in the foreground on the lower left-hand side, with an expression of fiercest rage and what looks like a hole in his temple, as though he had fired a bullet into it.

Even these later pages, however, offer the patient reader some rewards - not least among them a hilarious account of Grosz's abortive attempt to find work in Hollywood, in the course of which he was interviewed by a tycoon called "Uncle Carl" and a professional smiler and backslider whose sole function it was to counteract the depressing effect the tycoon had on most of his clients. Who "Uncle Carl" might be will be no mystery to Hollywood-watchers: the name rings.

Uncle Carl Lummle
Has a large famcme

hms, after all, travelled far beyond the charmed gates of Universal Studios.

"The reader must appreciate" Grosz warns us in his Preface, "that what I have not said I have chosen not to say." Indeed, the omissions are glaring. We hear nothing, for example, of Grosz's private life once he had left his parents' house; his wife, the famous "Dora" of his paintings, hardly figures in the narrative at all. He does not discuss the drinking problem which beset him in his later years and which was to be largely responsible for the accident that caused his death. The

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account of Grosz's Expressionist masters mentions Ensor, of course, but fails to mention the painter and draughtsman whom most of us would count among the most powerful influences on his mature art: Ludwig Meidner. One only has to glance at Grosz's "Horseman of the Apocalypse" to appreciate the extent and power of Meidner's influence—the exploding world under the horse's hooves derives unmistakably from Meidner, whom Grosz knew well and who in fact introduced him to his later publisher Wieland Herzfelde.

George Grosz died a disappointed man. Driven out of Germany by the advent of Hitler, coming to an America which had fascinated him before he

ever set foot on its shores and which he continued to love *quand même*, he found his work difficult to sell, commissions slow to arrive and quick to dry up, and the official art-world unwilling or unable to appreciate the direction his genius had taken after his emigration from Germany. In these later years he dismissed the political stance he had taken in the Weimar Republic as "a jumble of cheap progressive phrases which I had picked up from others and which seemed to pour like honey from my lips"; he became a conservative in art as well as in politics, vehemently opposing abstract painting (he called it "a euphemism for Rohrschach blots combined with geometrical patterns"), seeking to render naturalistically the

"grasses and stems and sand-dunes perpetually moulded by the wind" which had fascinated him as a boy but had found no place in his mature artistic work. Are his later works really as dreadful as the textbooks suggest? Might not a painting like *Cain* (1937)—a detail is reproduced in black-and-white in *A Small Yes and a Big No*—of the stick figure sequence produced eleven or twelve years later, be worth seeing? Was the later Grosz, like the later de Chirico, a burnt-out case, a man who had lost touch with the deepest sources of his inspiration? Perhaps the publication of this autobiography in its new English dress will lead to a comprehensive retrospective exhibition that will allow us all to judge for ourselves.



"State Functionary for the War Wounded (Grey Day)" (1921) is an oil painting by George Grosz; reproduced from *Art in Our Times: A Pictorial History 1890-1980* by Peter Selz (599pp, with 1,603 illustrations, Thames and Hudson, £30, 0 500 23364 0). This large volume is a "comprehensive survey of modern art in which illustration plays a central role, as the author explains in his preface: "... instead of adhering to the older methods of categorizing modern art as a sequence of movements, I decided to bring the unique aspect of each work into focus by means of visual juxtaposition. The usual historical pigeonholes are eschewed in favour of a comparative study arranged, in the case of painting and sculpture, according to theme, and, for photography, by building type. Neither still nor cinematic photography is included in the survey. Each pair of facing pages illustrates and discusses a particular theme—sculpted heads of children, for example. In addition, each chapter covers a single decade, and provides a synoptic table as well as an introduction 'to place the artistic developments within its general cultural framework'.

government of Prussia in July 1932 or to the establishment of Hitler's government six months later. Moses argues convincingly that this was not the result of a deliberate sell-out nor of secret collaboration with the Nazis, but rather of the fact that the unions were never politically or economically as free as they believed. Their integration into the state made action against that state very difficult, and to the last they hoped to remain a recognized element in Hitler's new order, as a letter from Leipart to Hitler in March 1933 shows. The social functions of the trade unions must be fulfilled regardless of the nature of the regime.

Dr Moses has given a full and useful account of the relations between the Free Trade Unions, the Social Democratic Party and the German state. The book is, however, not quite what its title implies: it is not a history of trade unionism in Germany, but rather one of the theory and practice of the Free Trade Unions. It says practically nothing about the other, non-socialist, unions, particularly the Catholic unions which, although their membership was only about a quarter of that of the Free Trade Unions, were of considerable importance in certain areas and an essential element in any coordinated working-class action. Stephen Hickey has pointed out, only 40 per cent of the miners were members of any union at all. There is also nothing about the role of other organizations such as the *Deutsche Arbeiterfront* and the *Federations der Arbeiter*, whose separate existence may have contributed to the overall weakness of the trade-union movement. We are also left with many unanswered questions about the Free Trade Unions themselves. How were they financed and what funds did they have at their disposal? How far did they withhold funds from local groups of which they disapproved (as Dick Pagan's dismissal of the socialist

members of the Free Trade Unions drove one into the unlikely position of agreeing with the Kaiser who, as the best of his biographers tells us, was said to the head of his secretariat, "I don't report only, but now and then a funny story"? He has performed an important service for students of modern German history in providing a comprehensive survey of an important and neglected field and setting out a constitutional, ideological and political framework within which further research into the social history of the German trade unions can and should be pursued.

ISLAM

HAMID ENAYAT

Modern Islamic Political Thought: The Response of the Shi'i and Sunni Muslims to the Twentieth Century 225pp, Macmillan, £14 (Paperback, £4.95), 0 333 27968 9

FOUAD AJAMI

The Arab Predicament: Arab Political Thought and Practice Since 1967

220pp, Cambridge University Press, £12.50, 0 521 23914 1

At first glance these two books have a good deal in common. Both deal with aspects of political thought in the contemporary Middle East. Both are written by political scientists of Shi'i background who have migrated from the Middle East to universities in the English-speaking West. Both are reasonably short, seeking to illuminate a vast subject by a series of spotlights rather than to describe or even summarize it comprehensively.

Yet they are very different, and even though both authors write at some length about "fundamentalism", without offering a definition of that contentious word, there is almost no overlap in the actual ideas and thinkers they discuss. Both seem to attach a positive value to Western notions of freedom, progress, nationalism, democracy and socialism, and to feel that on the whole the Muslim world would benefit if it could integrate (or discover) these within its own culture. Beyond that they part company, revealing personalities and preoccupations in total contrast.

Hamid Enayat died this summer at the age of forty-nine. An obituary in *The Times* described him as "a man uniquely qualified, by family background, education, and the breadth of his experience of Islam, to explain to the English-speaking world the nature and probable direction of the Islamic movements of today". "Uniquely" is pitching it strong, but it is true that no obviously superior candidate springs to mind. One could wish, perhaps, that in addition to the

three qualifications mentioned he had had a greater capacity to synthesize his material into a broad, coherent picture, a willingness to simplify in order to reach a wider audience, a greater boldness in stating and arguing a point of view. But certainly that is a good summary of what, in this book (tragically the only one he published in English), and numerous lectures and articles, he tried to do: to explain the nature and direction of Islamic movements.

Scholars of Muslim background writing and teaching in the West tend either to be apologists for Islam or to be largely ignorant about and uninterested in it outside a specific political or social context. Enayat is exceptional in being profoundly, even passionately, interested in Islam in its own right, yet capable of writing about it with scholarly detachment. To describe his work as apologetic would be insulting and wrong. But it is informed by, and derives its vitality from, a sense of commitment. He was keenly aware of the richness and diversity of Islamic thought, and wanted to share that awareness with others. He was, personally, a victim of the Islamic revolution in Iran, which obliged him to live in exile and caused him endless anxiety about his family and friends. He was rightly horrified by many of the forms which it took. But what pained him most, perhaps, was the caricature vision which it engendered of Islam, of Shi'ism, of Iran, and indeed of itself. He wanted it to be seen and understood in its intellectual context; he wanted to explain the subtlety and originality, as well as the explosive force, of the ideas that went into it.

That is the essential theme of *Modern Islamic Political Thought*. But although the book is presented as a self-contained work, and was actually published some weeks before his death, it gives the strong impression of being unfinished; or at least of being the first volume of two or more. The last chapter, entitled "Aspects of Shi'i modernism", ends abruptly, in the middle—as it seems—of a discussion of recent changes in the interpretation of the martyrdom of the Imam Husain, undoubtedly a crucial point, if not the crucial one, in the ideology of the

Modernism in motion

Edward Mortimer

Iranian revolution. A substantial part of this discussion is devoted to the interpretations of Sunni modernists. Only four pages before the end of the book does Enayat embark on "the Shi'i revisionist literature on Husayn", with the amazing statement that "works under this heading are few and far between, especially when compared with the Sunni literature". In fact he discusses only one of them, *The Immortal Martyr*, by Nizamullah Salhi Najaf-abadi, after which, on the last page of all, there is just half a paragraph on the use of the Husaini theme by Khomeini. The ideas of the Mujahidin-i Khalq and of Ali Shari'ati, referred to earlier in a section on Islamic interpretations of socialism, are not mentioned in this context at all. Indeed the book contains no reference anywhere to Ahmad Reza'i, the chief theorist of the Mujahidin, whose work *The Movement of Husain* anticipated both Najaf-abadi and Shari'ati in developing the theme of Husain as revolutionary hero rather than symbolic martyr.

Enayat concludes by listing a number of issues raised in the debate within the orthodox religious hierarchy which followed the publication of Najaf-abadi's book, and leaves us with the bald statement: "But these are issues which should be discussed on another occasion" — rather as though they would be the topic of next week's lecture. Alas, we are not destined to hear it. Nor shall we have the benefit of Enayat's guidance through the further developments in Islamic thought which must even now be under way. But we can at least be grateful for the present work. Enayat has explained to us, as probably no one else could have, how Sunni and Shi'i thought have interacted with each other, and how the attempt to grapple with the problems of the modern world has brought them closer together.

In theory, that is. But, according to Fouad Ajami, "underneath it all, the Sunnis and Shiites in Iraq were after all Sunnis and Shiites; no ideological pretension of any kind would bridge that gap". Ajami is not much interested in Islam or Islamic ideas as such. He too is a refugee from political upheaval — he was born in South

Lebanon — but from the social and intellectual climate in the Arab world, one senses more than from any physical danger. He has frequented American universities since the 1960s, and clearly feels quite as much at home there — probably more so — than Enayat did at Oxford. His speciality is telling his fellow Arabs what a hopeless lot they are; only he does it in English, and Americans just love to listen in.

Certainly, if there are any pro-Arab romantics still lurking on either side of the Atlantic, *The Arab Predicament* is a recommended cure. The version it gives of Arab history in the last fifteen years can be roughly summarized as follows: The defeat of 1967

devastatingly exposed the hollowness and bankruptcy of the pan-Arabist "revolutionary" movement — mainly Nasserism and Ba'athism — which had dominated the Arab political stage since the previous defeat, that of 1948. It describes the verve of the radical reaction: this time there would be real revolutions, not just the régimes but all the empty verbiage and feeble compromises would be got rid of, and the Palestinian *fidayin* were going to show the way. And so they did, all the way to Black September 1970 when they came up against the hard reality of King Hussein's bedouin army, whose soldiers could not read Marxist tracts but knew that the king who paid their wages was descended from the Prophet, and wanted no truck with unbelievers. So the old order proved stronger than the new: an age of pragmatism dawned, in which Egypt and Syria took money from the oil states and built mosques, set about training their armed forces seriously, and adopted moderate, realistic political objectives; and so came October 1973, when God smiled on the religious pragmatists, and the oil price went up. Henry Kissinger came running and it seemed as if everything was going to be all right — the Arabs were going to show everyone what a civilized, respectable nation they were. Only somehow they couldn't quite agree how to do it; and then they found themselves behaving in a very uncivilized way in Lebanon; and then Egypt went off on her own; and people began to wonder whether they really were Arabs, and if so what it meant; and then religion itself turned out to be rather dangerous and difficult to control. So now we have the prospect of Islamic revolution and getting back to our own authentic culture. But Ajami is sceptical about this: it will turn out to be just as much of an illusion as all the other "quick fixes" that have already been tried.

Ajami does not like religion very much. His main criticism of Arab political culture is that even the would-be secular ideologies and leaderships that it produces are in reality as much based on superstition and dogma and hieratic authority as any brand of "fundamentalism". One point he does have in common with Enayat is a degree of admiration for Ali Abd al-Raziq, who was condemned by the shahkha of al-Azhar in the 1920s for arguing that Islam did not entail any particular set of principles and that Muslims were free to choose whatever form of government they liked.

At present such ideas seem further than ever from being accepted. It is hard to finish Ajami's book feeling optimistic about Arab politics, but possible to finish it wondering whether one should be thinking about "Arab politics" at all. Although he shares the general Arab contempt for Sadat's style and his shallow, rootless idea of "civilization", Ajami argues that Sadat's withdrawal from the Arab front should not be seen as a personal aberration but reflected a general disillusionment with the idea of Arab unity, not confined to Egypt. He cites a survey carried out among undergraduates at Kuwait University which showed they identified far more with Islam, and with their particular Arab states, than with the idea of "one Arab nation" or "Arab brotherhood". Even the Palestinians, he suggests, learned from their clashes with Jordan and Syria and from the anarchy of Lebanon how important it is in this hard world to have a state of your own, and that is why their energies are now concentrated on getting one, rather than on earlier, more romantic goals, such as pan-Arab revolution or the liberation of all Palestine.

The book is full of such insights and aphorisms: not to be swallowed whole, but many of them worth chewing over.

Calling for Santa Claus

Malcolm Yapp

STANLEY WOLPERT

Roots of Contention in South Asia: Afghanistan, Pakistan, India and the Superpowers

220pp, Oxford University Press, £10.50, 0 19 502994 1

The argument of *Roots of Contention in South Asia* may be stated in the following way. United States policy in South Asia exhibits all the sensitivity and delicate subtleties of a bull in a china shop. In particular it pays little heed to cultural features and political realities which derive from long historical experience. A better understanding of the past could lead to the adoption of a different policy. Hence Stanley Wolpert proceeds to describe the past and to draw the outlines of a new policy for adoption by the United States.

As habits a man who has successfully combined the careers of novelist and historian, Wolpert's account of the past is brightly written. For some readers his account may be too bright and they may feel that the Black Hole "lock-up" and "Bob" Clive are taking popularization too far. Historians may also complain of his cavalier way with the facts of history. The "British East India Company" and "Russian" Uzbekistan" are solecisms; the story of Charles Napier's one-word telegram "Pecay" (it gave a healthy scepticism concerning the unscrupulous conquest of Sind) is a good one, but untrue; 4000, not 16,500

British Indian troops perished during the retreat from Kabul in 1842-43; and the Viceroy, Lord Lawrence, can hardly be described as a Scot, since he was born in Yorkshire of a Northern (Scots) Irish family. More serious are errors of judgment such as a stereotyped picture of Muslim civilization and a gross over-estimate of the value of India to Britain which culminates in the absurd suggestion that the present problems of the British economy derive from the loss of India. It behoves a man who complains that others have not learnt the lessons of history that he should ensure that the lessons are worth learning.

The implication that some historical lessons may not be worth learning prompts a wider question raised by this book and by similar studies of the "roots" of other contemporary problems. It is arguable that social, economic, political and technological changes during the last two centuries have made history into a poor guide to today's world. We may take an obvious example. In discussions of the strategic implications of recent events in Afghanistan we are frequently reminded, as in this book, that the Indian sub-continent has often been invaded from Afghanistan, and we are left to deduce that we should expect a repetition if we do not take adequate means of precaution against such an eventuality. But the truth is that the factors which made past invasions possible do not now exist, and it is equally possible that a Soviet invasion of the Indian sub-continent would then be talking about a Soviet invasion of Russia has ever invaded India. A healthy scepticism concerning the alleged lessons of history may be no bad thing in a modern politician.

If we leave history aside for the moment we can examine Wolpert's criticisms of US policy on their merits. He argues that the decision to draw Pakistan into the Dulles containment system was a grave blunder because indistinguishably perceived that the weapons supplied to Pakistan might be turned against himself. The American error was compounded by Nixon in 1971 who the United States leaned towards Pakistan in the conflict with India, and Reagan seems now to be repeating the folly by siding with Afghan guerrillas and backing the regime in Afghanistan. There is little doubt that Wolpert is right in contending that his country's policies helped to drive India into reliance on the Soviet Union, although he leaves out of account one important factor, namely China. To India, Pakistan alone presents little menace; it is the Sino-Pakistan alliance which induces India to look to the USSR for help. The two circumstances which "could" and "should" rapprochement between a Sino-Soviet friendship and a Sino-Indian alliance. It is hardly likely that the United States would think that India was worth the former and the Soviet Union is currently doing its unintended best to bring about the latter event. The resolution of the matter would scarcely seem to be wholly within American control.

Wolpert's own recommended United States policy for South Asia is no alliance with any state but lots of economic aid for all; in short, a Santa Claus policy. Curiously enough, if there is one policy for which no historical argument exists it is this one. The Santa Claus policy is based entirely on first principles and a liberal

faith in the future. Economic aid brings material benefits which smooth away conflicts caused by deprivation and lead towards a liberal Utopia. At the heart of that Utopia is liberty. "Our commitment must be to freedom and the first article of our political faith, self-determination," writes Wolpert. And so we come back to those nineteenth-century irreconcilables, liberalism and nationalism now combined with an irrelevance,

prosperity. One man's self determination tends to be another man's loss of freedom, and the recent past suggests that rapid increases of prosperity increase the appetite for self-determination rather than for freedom. This book will present European with a familiar dilemma: which is worse — a liberal or a conservative American? One bull in a china shop is bad but imagine another bull trying to put the place together again.

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Seeking to sanctify

Peter Avery

ANNEMARIE SCHIMMEL

As Through a Veil: Mystical Poetry in Islam

359pp. Columbia University Press. \$35.75. 0 231 05246 4

Although these five lectures on Muslim mystical poetry were given for the American Council of Learned Societies in its History of Religions Series, they are a welcome addition to the history of literature as much as of religion; an up-to-date blend of the scholarship both of the historian of Persian literature, E. G. Browne, and of R. A. Nicholson, who, besides writing a history of Arabic literature, was a prolific student

of Islamic mysticism or Sufism - and, like Annemarie Schimmel, looked at contemporary poetical exponents of it as well as classical. She takes this all-embracing approach to Islamic literature further than most earlier scholars and, later in time, has more to notice. She does it comprehensively, because of her wide knowledge of both the dialects and the courtly idiom of all the main Muslim tongues, and because she is so much at home among the derivatives of the Indian sub-continent. Knowledge of works on religion in a variety of non-Islamic languages is combined with that of Sufism to make her book an introduction to Sufism as well as to its remarkable literature; but in a series of lectures some details of the study of Sufism inevitably fall by the wayside. An annotated anthology

of Sufi quotations about the "fulness of the Godhead" sufficiently avoids "philosophy" to leave unanswered some of the questions the theologians, called by one of her Sufi poets the "grammarians of religion", might ask. Instead, what Sufism means to those who have attempted to express their intimations is given with an integrity and amplitude of learning to which seventy-five pages of notes and thirty-five of bibliography handsomely attest. Islamic dogmatics aim to legislate for every aspect of the human condition, but it is only with its Sufi dimension that Islam comes close to catering for the promptings of the human heart, and it is a boon to have such a guide as this to what in Islam must always evoke response wherever hallowed life is the quest.

As in all else Islamic, Arabic was the first medium of expression and artists the pioneers of Sufism. The first lecture is appropriately on Arabic mystical poetry. It is salutary for anyone steeped in the major Persian canon to be reminded that the topoi and, excepting the *mathnawi*, principal verse-forms were first produced in Islam's sacred language. If other evidence were lacking, an early non-Sufi Persian poet's

I have brought four things, Lord. Your treasury lacks: I have brought existence, non-existence, asking forgiveness and sin.

might suggest that the "impudence" (*gustakhi*) of Sufi personal and castigatory apostrophes of God was purely Persian. But it turns out to have featured initially in the sayings of Arab mystics, notably Hallaj (d. 922), who was in this a model for the Persians. His "attempt to rehabilitate Satan" was bound to anything Persian. Before Hallaj, unity of being exonerated Iblis of the crime attributed to him in the Koran (11.32), of disobeying God's command to the angels to bow down to Adam, the Vicegerent on earth and knower of the names of His creatures (cf. Genesis, 11.19). To obey such a command would have abrogated the greatest command of all, that only God should be adored.

Unfortunately the opportunity this context provides, to discuss the Sufis' stress on Man's superiority to the angels, due to his special Covenant with God - the Covenant Sufis refer to as *Alast* - is not taken. It might have been, because it is related to an aspect of Sufism not emphasized but implicit throughout the book's quotations: the extraordinary humanism of this anti-carnal but at the same time all-comprehending teaching. In the anti-carnal context it must be noted that, though in its progress the book includes most of the important Sufi terms and has an Index of Technical Terms, more needs to be said about *hafa*, the carnal spirit or "lower self" and its hostility to what the Persians call *qan*, the divine In Man to which the Divine calls, a word omitted from both the text and index. It may also be said that the lectures prompt enquiry into so much that their purpose, either as a literary study, which they mainly are, or as a study of Sufism in depth, becomes obscured, as is likely when the greatness of the Sufi theme precludes much discussion of the *qan*, *rithman*, though Professor Schimmel's comments on patterns and calligraphy tantalizingly hint that she could say more on the latter. The impression is left that, limited by the lecture form, she was frustratedly unable in the end to say sufficient either on Sufism or on the intrinsic nature of its expression. It is the, as it were, suppressed copiousness of her learning that makes gaps in the book the more glaring, and the book is too important for some of them to be ignored.

Though more pointedly mentioned in the lecture on "Mystical Poetry in the Vernaculars" near the end of the book, her treatment of the Persian Sufi use of the word *ma'ad*, man, given in the second lecture, "Classical Persian Mystical Poetry", needs amplification: the word implies during the millennium of the brave, the chivalrously gallant and a generosity which knows no withholding. It is about fighting "the good fight". The crucial role of the undated in Man's quest to regain

sanctity might also have been more strongly emphasized where, in the masterly lecture on Rumi, allusion is made to Koran, verses 27 and 28. In full, verse 28 says, "Return to thy Lord, approving and approved". The Sufi use of this means more than simply "disappearing into the eternal abyss", and the verse from Rumi cited, with its pun on "hand-clapping/foam-raising", speaks of the dynamic tension involved in the rediscovery of grace; a tension explained by the words omitted in the author's Note giving the Koranic verse, *approving and approved*. For they imply freedom of choice, as well as being chosen in the "trustful soul" God addresses in the preceding verse. Hence, though the problem of free will is one of the most difficult in Islamic Studies, in this instance the author missed the opportunity to show that Sufism is less nihilistic than has often been supposed.

The issue of the "cruelty" implicit in many Sufi descriptions of the spirit's torment and lover's sacrificial craving, with its masochistic element, is not neglected, but discussion of the Sufis' social role and the frequent appalling vicissitudes their world suffered is. Since Sufism was often animated by social distress and political turmoil this avoidance of environmental factors is regrettable, especially in a work most of whose quotations from the poetry -

The dawning spindle moans God, O God! The trembling and shaking in fear of the Lord.

- are about the need to know life's sacredness. There are teachers who never tire of reiterating that even Sufi poets were "political animals". Cruel images were part of everyday experience. Attar's recurrent military imagery, the ubiquitous references to blood, of which more must be said, his maimed and executed prisoners, come as no surprise in the works of one whose home was twelfth and thirteenth-century Nishapur; but is this from Francis Thompson surprising?

Naked I wait Thy love's uplifted sword! My hominess piece by piece Thou hast heven from me.

The burden of Sufism's immense literature leaves little room for the drawing of parallels between Muslim and Christian mystical utterance, but it is gratifying to see how handy *The Oxford Book of English Mystical Verse* has proved. While discussion of the nature of Islamic society seems to have been avoided, the essential task of demonstrating the Koran's centrality to Sufism is well accomplished. Sufism is not so much unorthodox as ultra-orthodox. It carries Koranic insistence on monotheism to its logical conclusion, as reference to Hallaj's "heresy" (near, perhaps, Milton's) tends to show. Stress on the unity of all Being has also engendered the charge of pantheism, which is skillfully rebutted in this book. But the Sufis' ultra-orthodoxy perturbed both the Establishment, and the fundamentalist, suspicious alike of allegorical interpretations and antinomianism. The Sufi was persecuted by combinations of both, on political, as well as doctrinal grounds. Yet he discovered in the Holy Book and Muhammad's dream all the seeds of sanctity, and the final, exultant revelation of why Man had been cast among the steeples and valleys of this world.

Well elucidated is the way the perceptive can "ascend" holiness in the world. Sufi poetry is psychologically accurate in portraying the evocative power of smell. The western searcher for inspiration in this kind of poetry must not be put off by its earthiness. It is composed in lands where the clarity of the skies makes heaven seem very close to an earth however marred, and where certain dichotomies nurtured in the West are unknown. Rumi's epiphany-poem is cited. That of Hafiz of over a century later might have been added for the verse:

Still on the heels of my tomb with wine and laurel,
For me to rise from the grave at the scent of you, disdaining.
The world had to be sanctified when it

smelt of God. The smell of blood could also be blessed. Rumi, addressing the friend who was the surrogate for The Friend, said,

When, as if I were a dog, blood is offered me
for your earthly vessel,
I'd be a fool not to see it as a draught for nobles.

Blood is made holy in Christianity too and, though it is not entirely overlooked, in a lecture which so much enlarges our understanding of Rumi (d. 1273), more might have been said about the influence on him of an Anatolian environment. He is cited as having said "Love is free from the narrowness of the prayer-niche and the cross", and to think of the Turkish Christian ethos of Asia Minor is to remember the close association between Sufi Orders and frontier armies with their forts, called *ribat*, a word which also came to mean Sufi hospice. Professor Schimmel remarks on the fact that folk mystical poems were often composed for missionary purposes, but discussion of Sufism's predominance among soldiers and on frontiers does not follow. She would doubtless agree that this is a topic for research, but not one this book could encompass.

Also in the lecture on vernacular mystical verse, a ball that looked as if it had escaped over the boundary is retrieved - but only just - when we are told that the guiding elder, the *Pir*, became firmly established through folk poetry, the medium which seems to have ensured the continued liveliness of Sufism in North Africa and the Indian Sub-Continent. But more prominence ought to have been given to the emphasis that poets of the classical tradition, in particular Attar, give to the function of the *Pir*, without whose guidance nothing can be gained. It is only in the last two lectures that light is thrown on the subject of the Sufis' regard for exemplars: there the significance of those exordia in which Attar excelled, concerning Lives of the Prophets and, above all, Muhammad, becomes clear.

One of the most important lectures as well as most original is, in fact, the last, on the praises of the Prophet Muhammad. It seems that the Muslim's desire to follow the Prophets as emblems of perfection induces a greater readiness to acknowledge Man's fall from grace than is evident in the West. Hence the yearning for leaders who, through devotion and recognizing their wretchedness, have progressed nearer than others to God; hence too, the especial veneration felt for the Prophet of Islam, Seal of Prophecy, so perfect that he could commune with God more closely than Gabriel or Moses. Humility in confessing sin and acknowledging our fallen state are the hallmarks of all great religions and are initial requisites of the Sufi Path. Otherwise the idea of returning would have no meaning. This return is the way of health. It is a state of hope; the most moving passage, Attar's *Maniqat-Tair* ("Parliament of Birds"), one of the most momentous in all Sufi literature, is that in the story of Shaikh Sa'ad, when Muhammad appears as both the instigator and harbinger of God's forgiveness, His compassion for His creatures.

The author observes that the westerner "rarely realizes" what special sanctity Muhammad has for the Muslim. The answer to this must be that her book is, after all, an enrichment, introduction to the universal appeal of Islam, but the Sufi's messages of the power of love and the Divine Compassion. Whether, or not, the westerner is "tinged with centuries-old prejudices", he does not often come across this aspect of Islam. No doubt Asyullah Khomel's heart is fully informed of *Islam*, mystical philosophy, of which he has been a celebrated teacher; but the heart is hidden and actions speak for themselves. This book's greatest value is as an instructive and readable reassertion of that Islamic dimension which prevents a faith that is also the Law from degenerating into a Code of Conduct, or worse, a slogan for fanatics. Jesus abrogated Pharisaic formalism. Muslims are taught to revere him as a Prophet. Sufis also see him as one of themselves.

FICTION

Haughty falconry and collective guilt

Bill Buford

GABRIEL GARCÍA MÁRQUEZ

Chronicle of a Death Foretold
Translated from the Spanish by Gregory Rabess
122pp. Cape. £5.95.
0 224 01950 2

Gabriel García Márquez has repeatedly expressed his surprise at being so insistently regarded as a writer of fantastic fiction. That exotic or "magical" element so characteristic of his work is, by his account, not really his own achievement. It is merely the reality of Latin America, which he has faithfully transcribed in more or less the same way that he might write about film, say, an ordinary article written for a daily newspaper. On a number of occasions, in fact, Márquez has said that for him there is no real difference between the writing of journalism and the writing of fiction - both are committed to the rigours of realistic representation - and his own ideal of the novel involves as much reportage as imagination. Viewed in this way, Márquez can be seen as an inspired topical reporter for whom the strange Colombian world - with its present prostitutes, benevolent ghosts, and an eccentric magician who refuses to die - is just his everyday journalist's "beat".

A new throw at the old game

Idris Parry

HERMANN HESSE

Pictor's Metamorphoses and other Fables
Translated by Rika Lesser
212pp. Cape. £7.50.
0 224 02025 0

In the last story of this collection Hesse remarks that "our imagination is not always satisfied with the most plausible explanation". Without this dissatisfaction there would presumably be no imagination. Fantasy is an objection to the limits of logical understanding. All nineteen pieces in this book are fantasies, chosen by Theodore Ziolkowski from a half-century of Hesse's writings. Some are tales of magic in the style of the Brothers Grimm or *The Arabian Nights*; at the other extreme we find social satires in which prevalent and objectionable trends are exaggerated to appear fantastical. All are perfectly representative of an author whose fictional heroes, from Demian to Harry Haller in *Steppenwolf* and Josef Knecht in *The Glass Bead Game*, are aware of the plausible explanation and reject it in favour of dream.

Hesse includes in one of his later stories published here a fairy-tale written when he was ten. It is his first known piece of prose composition, and it sets the tone for the "soul biographies" (his term) which are his collected works. In every case the logical starts from known life. In the first story of this volume, "Lulu", he introduces himself and his early biogen friends in transparent disguise. The characters are manipulated through scenes which develop from plausible fact to fantasy like a tale from Hoffmann. Incidents from the remote past surface in the present; myth takes its place as a familiar component of life. This author waits to tell us that there is always a bridge between the visible and the invisible. The admirable thing about Hesse is that he elaborates the obvious with such affecting sincerity. For him originality means simply going back to the origins. He does not surprise, but he satisfies.

When he describes dreams in one of these stories as "nocturnal games" he connects with a constant theme of his work, the dream or fantasy as a gambit, a new throw, which shakes up and rearranges what is already there. His books are games about life. Every *Marchen* owes its existence to the belief that at each moment there is a fresh arrangement of pieces, always in the process of transformation, and that

The image is not entirely fanciful. In an interview published in last winter's *Paris Review*, for example, he says that the non-fiction account of contemporary Cuba that he is currently writing will prove to his critics "with historical facts that the real world in the Caribbean is just as fantastic as the stories in *One Hundred Years of Solitude*." What he is really writing, he says, is good old-fashioned "socialist realism".

Chronicle of a Death Foretold is very close to Márquez's ideal fiction. Written in the manner of investigative journalism and in a conspicuously flattened, unadorned prose, the novel sets out to reconstruct a murder that occurred twenty-seven years before. The crime originates with the Vicario family: a provincial household in which the brothers are all brought up to be men and the sisters to be wives. "Any man will be happy with them," the mother boasts, "because they have been made to suffer." The youngest daughter, Angela Vicario, does in fact marry the wealthy general's son who arrived six months before with silver saddlebags that matched the buckle of his belt and the rings on his boots, but on their wedding-night she reveals that she is not a virgin. What was meant to be an occasion for celebration turns out to be a public humiliation. And it is then that Angela tells her twin brothers the name of her supposed seducer: Santiago Nasar.

each moment and each piece contains the possibility of every other. The many transformations of this book's little story (bird becomes flower becomes butterfly becomes gemstone) signify the effortless intimacy with all life, embracing all connections, which the author hopes for himself. As his first metamorphosis Pictor becomes a tree, which must be the most common poetic symbol for receptivity.

The outsider is a persistent figure in these tales. The hero of the story "Flamenco" is repeatedly stupid because he will take no part in the activities of his fellows. Eventually they come to regard him, because of his deep familiarity with nature, as an intermediary between men and the gods, another world. "The Mermaid" is an episode set in fifteenth-century Italy, is about a strange sea-creature attacked by men because of its singularity. It is later recognized to be an emissary of the god Poseidon; it has a human torso, a fish-tail, and it speaks an obscure dialect of Greek. In "The

Man of the Forest" the outsider kills a priest who has kept his flock in traditional ignorance. This rebel then rushes out through the known physical frontiers of his tribal world, as he has forced his way through imposed boundaries of knowledge. He is outside the law, but the suggestion here, as in Kafka, is that true law exists only outside the confines of the permissible. The outsider or outlaw seems in the end to know more about the springs of life than the lawful can learn from their books.

The story "Bird" (incidentally, a nickname for Hesse himself) is about a bird which is rare and valued but ultimately driven off: "one day the extraordinary beings are hunted and shot dead, prices are put on their heads or their hides, and not long afterwards their existence turns into a legend, which with the wings of bird flies ever further away." In an ancient belief birds often figure as messengers of the gods. It is appropriate that Hesse's most powerful image of the troublesome

outsider should come in another story about a bird, the last story in this book. "The Jackdaw" is a perfect example of how the writer can transform fact into legend. The tale starts normally enough. Hesse walks in the everyday world of his favourite resort, Baden. He observes a tame jackdaw hopping on a bridge. This bird, familiar with humanity, exhibits an abnormal degree of individuality and so becomes an outsider. Hesse speculates that the jackdaw may have been separated from his fellows because he was a mischief-maker, "which in no way rules out his being a genius." Perhaps he was such a nuisance to his family and society that he was "solemnly excommunicated" and, like the seagull, driven out into the wilderness. From the familiar bridge at Baden Hesse projects his story into the mystery of the sacrificed king, connects with magic and religion, and links with the first fantastic bird he says he wants "to go back to where all things begin." He does all this by means of the less plausible explanation.

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Life in a bottle-full of dust

David Montrose

BETTE PESETSKY

Stories up to a Point
144pp. Bodley Head. £5.95.
0 370 30483 7

Bette Pesetsky assembles short declarative sentences into very short stories, the kind that are now usually called fictions; their traditional "story" elements having been minimized. A new British fictioneer of this type would probably owe much to Gabriel Jolipovici and Gilles Gordon; Pesetsky, a new American - and an alumna of the Iowa Writers' Workshop - reflects the influence of Donald Barthelme, revered in creative writing classes for his apparent imitability. All fifteen stories in this first collection "incorporate" Barthelme's early "see-Jane-run" method of construction. Typically, Pesetsky's narrator (always a woman) endures misadventure thematically or by association (the title story, an exception, comprises six *réclés* in no particular order). If the resulting arrangement appears to skip inconsequently between two points, this is because it is designed only in Barthelme's words, to "supply a kind of sense of what is going on".

A number of stories are catalogues of misfortune that lack distinctiveness almost to the point of being interchangeable. The standard heroine is cursed with broken relationships. Banned her lies a string of divorces (the narrator of "Scratch" holds the record with five); her

Pesetsky has borrowed Barthelme's method, but not his madness, eschewing the surreal for a firm attachment to the quotidian: one does not encounter here a glass mountain in Manhattan, or zombies on a wife-buying expedition. Her world, though, is the familiar made strange: second-hand echoes of Kafka - as distilled, that is, through Barthelme - permeate these stories. Their heroines are anonymous inhabitants of anonymous places; when familiar locations are named, they have no more substantiality than that of words on the page; other people exist only as one-dimensional shadows. Neurotic, lonely, sad, Pesetsky's women endure lives of quiet desperation and write anxious, jerky prose. But they occupy no world apart; theirs is the one we inhabit, with the same phone-in-shows, Wednesday, spastic children. The point, presumably, is that life is the angle of vision of the beholder: every individual creates a subjective reality. For Pesetsky's casualities, it will be as it appears in her stories; a bleak, directionless trial.

In "The Hobbyist" the narrator becomes obsessed with reconstructing her grandmother's life through his files. She has a collection of bottles filled with over the decades. Forbidden incidents

are recalled, secrets uncovered: "In the late Thirties, he must have taken a mistress. *Dust from dress of R. Dust from bed of R. Dust from door of R's room, 1938.*" "Dyslexia" is the story nearest to Barthelme's unique comedy. Elsewhere, Pesetsky's attempts at fashionably grim humour achieve only grimness, relieved by odd amusing passages. Throughout, one suspects that Pesetsky has chosen the wrong master, and this feeling hardens into conviction whenever she utilizes family history. As far as one can divine from recurrent motifs, Pesetsky's ancestors were Polish Jews; her grandparents brought the family to America. Unsurprisingly, quiet resonances of Isaac Bashevis Singer can be detected wherever she draws on this background. Then one realizes how much better a more traditional master, such as Singer, would have served her. The vividness of Pesetsky's wounded are strikingly similar to those endured by comparable characters in Singer's "American" stories, but there is a wide gap between their portrayals. Barthelme's kind of minimalist is simply too detached and impressionistic to suggest a full spectrum of human predicaments; in his own work, of course, it is not meant to. Pesetsky may write as she does precisely in order to avoid comparisons with Singer, or perhaps in order to be modern. Whatever the reason, she will have to realize that her incomparability between form and content is a liability.

over the decades. Forbidden incidents

the rubber workers in a nearby town. Divina Flur - the servant meant for Santiago's future bed - is now fat, tattered, and surrounded by the children of other livers. And, finally, after more than twenty years, Angela Vicario is reunited with the husband whose affronted masculine pride was the cause of the crime. Overweight, perspiring and bald, he arrives still carrying the same silver saddlebags that now serve merely as pathetic reminders of his ostentatious youth. Márquez's chronicle moves backwards and forwards in time, and views the participants in a senseless murder long after the passion that contributed to it has died. In many ways, then, the novel offers itself as an icy demythologizing of both romantic love and the romantic fully it inspires: it is a debunking of dream and sentiment hinted at by the book's epigraph: "the hunt for love is haughty falconry".

But the real significance of the murder is much greater, and is felt by the entire community whose unrefined faith in its own codes of justice and spectacle is responsible for the crime. The weight of this responsibility is felt most, though, by the unnamed narrator: he returns because he is bothered not by an unsolved mystery but by an unthoughtful guilt, and the chronicle he produces is a document charting the psychology of mass complicity. It is interesting that Márquez, in developing a simple tale fraught with obvious political implications, chose not to fictionalize an actual political event. Latin America provides more than enough material - but to front instead a fictional episode with the methods of a journalist. In so doing he has written an unusual and original work: a simple narrative so charged with irony that it has the authority of political fable. If not an example of the socialist realism Márquez may claim it to be elsewhere, *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* is in any case a mesmerizing work that clearly establishes Márquez as one of the most accomplished of the most "magical" of political novelists writing today.

Writers at Work: The Paris Review Interviews, Third Series, edited by George Plimpton with an introduction by Alfred Kazin, has recently been reissued by Penguin Books (368pp., £2.95, 0 14 00 400 27 3). First published in 1977, the book contains interviews with, among others, Jean Cocteau, Louis-Ferdinand Céline, William Burroughs, Saul Bellow and Norman Mailer. Series One to Three are now all in print in paperback and the Fourth Series, including interviews with Vladimir Nabokov and John Updike, will be reissued on September 30.

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From bruises to brevities

J. I. M. Stewart

RICHARD LITTLE PURDY and
MICHAEL MILLGATE (Editors)

The Collected Letters of Thomas
Hardy: Volume Three 1902-1908
367pp. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
£19.50.
0 19 812620 4

There are to be seven volumes of Hardy's letters, and this one opens his career as a novelist happily (he feels) behind him. At the end of 1902 he informs Martin Maarten that "brevities" in verse, "produced with no regard to their effect or value", have none occupied him of late, "because that form of expression seems to fit me though I thought better of it grow older, as it did when I was young also." The persona, already familiar to us, is frequently reiterated or enlarged upon in the years that follow. He has no counsel to give on novel-writing, "having written no novel myself for the last 12 or 13 years, & scarcely read any." In 1917 the trusting he had received over *Jude the Obscure* is still visible on his sensitive skin, as when he writes to H. W. Massingham:

About a dozen years ago the English novel (& I may add, the English drama) was developing on sound lines in the direction of a real grasp of life, which would I think have resulted in the formation of a school unqualified in any other literature. However, the English & American press set itself with a will to stamp out the torch, on the grounds of morality... & the result was that English fiction was paralyzed into feeble imitations of *Dumas père* &c., resulting in what we now see - the field being left almost entirely to women at the present time.

Like Virginia Woolf after publishing *Orlando*, Hardy even inclined to find something derogatory in the term "novelist", writing to thank Henry W. Newhall for an appreciative article, he has this to say: "By the way, perhaps the word 'novelist' which you use (for which I have no affection, since innumerable young ladies who have published a tale at their own expense call themselves by that name) might be exchanged for 'author' or 'writer' or anything you like."

There are two or three letters in which, at a more substantially critical level, Hardy gives his reasons for being out of sympathy with what he calls the impressionist school of fiction as chiefly presented for him by Henry James. Yet "James is almost the only living novelist I can read, & taken in small doses I like him exceedingly." In being as he is a real man of letters, "an amusing passage he tells Florence Henniker that he and his wife have both been reading *The Wings of the Dove* - "but we have been arguing ever since about what happened to the people". With James, indeed, he may be sensed as foisting himself to be in a common predicament when he tells Arthur Symonds of his "growing sense that there is nobody to address, no public that knows", and that this takes away his zest for production. Literature is being progressively commercialized, as is exemplified in "that pernicious custom in some so-called literary papers of publishing lists of 'best-selling' books - which in the interests of all literary art should be kept a dead secret". And he knew a "real man of letters" when he saw one. Receiving a copy of *The Man of Property* from Galsworthy, who is a stranger to him, he replies with a slightly chilling "I am looking forward to reading it the first spare evening I have". And he does try - "I began I tell another correspondent, "but found the people too materialistic & soiled to be interesting."

It is to be observed that Hardy's lapsed interest in his novels is by no means matched by a disregard of their continual financial possibilities. There are numerous vigilant letters to publishers and agents in this area, notably one dropping heavily on Macmillans for omitting the words "The Wessex Novels" from the half-titles of a new edition. This inclusive title, he points out, is copyright, and valuable copyright at that. These

necessary mundane matters apart, however, his chief concern during these years is with the successive publication of the three parts of *The Dynasts*. There are various anxieties. Much of the blank verse has perhaps been insufficiently revised and polished, and there is the large question of its appropriateness for the presentation of, for example, parliamentary debates. And how valid, and how original, is the philosophy? "That the Unconscious Will of the Universe is growing aware of itself I believe I may claim as my own idea solely... I believe too, that the Prime Cause, this Will, has never before been called it, in any literature English or foreign." He is particularly, and rightly, proud of "the lyrical account of the fauna of Waterloo field". "It does happen that (so far as I know) in the many treatments of Waterloo in literature, those particular persons who were present have never been alluded to before." The reception of the work has been venustously if predictably mixed. *The Times* has printed a review full of *adjectives*, and the drama's art is likely to be made the scape-goat of its philosophy in many quarters. "My reviews", Hardy tells Henry Newhall, "have largely been women, especially in America. Surely editors ought to know that such a subject could hardly be expected to appeal to women." This curious thought, that *The Dynasts* "is not exactly a woman's book", recurs several times.

Rollicking down river

Humphrey Carpenter

JOSEPH CONNOLLY

Jerome K. Jerome: A Critical Biography
318pp. Oxford, £7.95.
0 85613 349 3

Jerome K. Jerome

Three Men in a Boat
Edited by Christopher Matthew and Benny Green
192pp. Michael Joseph, £12.50.
0 907156 08 4

Yet again, somebody has thought of putting *Three Men in a Boat* on the screen. This autumn, sixty minutes on BBC1 will be taken up with the antics of young James, Christopher Matthew and Tim Rice, as they reconstruct the journey of J. George, and Harris. Mr Rice's part in the proceedings has yet to be explained. (Does he foresee a libretto in 1977? I would refer him to Hubert Gregg's charming songs for radio version of *Three Men* broadcast some time, as I recall, around the early 1960s.) But Mr Green and Mr Matthew have already declared their interest. The television river-trip is to publicize their new annotated edition of the book. Or vice versa.

And alongside all this comes a new biography of Jerome by Joseph Connolly. None of this, it should be pointed out, has anything to do with a Jerome centenary - he was born in 1859 and died in 1927, while *Three Men* made its bow in print in 1889, so there are still seven years to go before the excuse can be used. More to the point, it is not very clear why Mr Connolly thinks a new biography is needed at all. He points out quite justly that the existing life of Jerome by Alfred Moore (1928) is hagiographical, but the same criticism might be levelled at his own work, which depicts a virtually flawless Jerome. More seriously, there seems to be little worth saying about the man, once the upheavals of his early years have been recounted.

Jerome Klappa Jerome was born in Walsall, equipping his second name from a Hungarian general who was staying in the house at the time. (Who was this General George Klappa? Connolly tells us that he was "only twenty-eight years old" and "was writing his memoirs while staying in the Jerome household" - which given that Jerome's *père's* second name was Clapp, lends one to suspect him of

Much of the correspondence is naturally with persons of some distinction in literature, but there is an absolute and curious lack of communication with writers of his own eminence. Nor, when he ran into them, do they prompt much comment. "I went to the Gosse wedding Tuesday... H. James sat next to me in the ch. I have to lunch at the House of Commons tomorrow." Swinburne "is cheerful & boyish & looking well". About Meredith, a friend for forty years, there is a little more, including the information that he has broken an ankle, which seems hard on a man who lost the use of both legs a long time ago. To his wife the general level of his communicativeness on such matters is well represented by a letter sent to her in Calais. (Emma spent a good deal of time in Calais, finding the air "invigorating".)

At the Athenaeum I met Hy James, saw Kipling, talked to Humphrey Ward, was introduced to the Vice-Chancellor of Oxford University (who is a member) &c. I practically lived at the club. I lunched one day with the Macmillans at their business place, St Martin's St. It is a very large establishment, with an immense number of clerks. They have a million books there, & room for 2 millions. The cats are quite well, & the plan of my return. Fixe particularly, as she thinks I understand her. Yrs T.

In these years the cats at Max Gate

seem to have become Hardy's principal point of rapport with his wife. Markie wants to be friendly with Snowdove. Comfy is indifferent. Snowdove is killed by a train and is buried in the Pets' Cemetery. Hardy obtaining from the sculptor Hamo Thornycroft a chisel with which to incise the name on Portland stone. But one has to be realistic: "Kitsy is having her kittens this afternoon. We are going to drown them to-morrow morning except one."

This mortuary note is not of course confined to the brute creation, whether at Dorchester or Waterloo. Influenza rages through the letters, and with other ailments presages doom. "Half the House of Commons is down with it." Hardy notes with satisfaction at one point, Horbert Grierson's wife suffers some minor indisposition and Hardy hopes that she will "pull round". "Those I used to find in houses I find in the churchyard" (or "horizontal"). "They are thinning out ahead of us." There is a great deal of this, and the note is often commonplace rather than macabre. "To-day a shopkeeper for Dorchester has been buried... he has caused a perceptible gap in my outlook", Hardy informs Edmund Gosse.

Many of the letters document, in a rather uninteresting way, Hardy's inveterate "ragging about London", year after year, when the town is "carrying on its old games of the season as usual". At home he is really much more at ease, as if aware that it is more

he had been writing in *The Idle Thoughts of an Idle Fellow* (1886), a collection of short humorous pieces on such topics as "Babies", "Punished Apartments", and "Being Idle". The boat trip provided a framework on which to hang such stuff. The trip itself was part fact, part fiction; "George" was drawn from the life (George Wingrave, Jerome's room-mate in digs for many years) while "Harris" was the Faustian figure, a kind of private joke, being based on one Carl Hentschel, a strict teetotaler. Jerome afterwards alleged that he had intended to write a "straight" history of the Thames, but this can hardly be so; the chunks of history and the mawkish musings creep in because he was not entirely sure of his audience (an editor who serialized the book made him out a good many more of them before it went into print), and perhaps also because, by the time he wrote *Three Men*, Jerome was part of a literary circle that included the arch-sentimentalist J. M. Barrie. But from the very first sentence of the book sets out determinedly to be funny. "There were four of us - George, and William Samuel Harris, and myself, and Montmorency. We were sitting in my room, smoking, and talking about how bad we were - had from a medical point of view I mean, of course."

Connolly's chief revelation in his life of Jerome is the violent dislike which *Three Men* aroused in the literary world of its time. Jerome's style was branded "the new humour", and seems to have had roughly the impact that *Private Eye* did on its first appearance. But why? One wants to know much more about this. Was the *Punch* comparison, and was Jerome, as Connolly implies, really the first person to make use of the colloquialisms of the young male middle-class Londoner for humorous effect? Connolly's book is subtitled "A Critical Biography", but he is virtually nothing about this central question, and his "criticism" of *Three Men* is confined to a lengthy and utterly unnecessary potting of the book's plot. As to Jerome's life, after the appearance of *Three Men*, we learn very little that seems to have any real significance. There was a quiet rather mysterious marriage to a and the "deformities" then produced a child of their own - which in itself is malice, his love of the pipe-smoking, and his sentimental attitude to women, are all so reminiscent of his friend Barrie that one expects the

rewarding to be a man of property, a literary consequence than a metropolitan. He is concerned over the bad state of Dorchester's sewage system (but satisfied that Max Gate "too far off to be much affected"). He encourages antiquarian activities (sending 10/6 towards the cost of excavations at Maumbury Ring and a homespun dramatization of his own works. Consulted about a projected Guide to Dorchester, he is of the opinion that a stone indicating the spot where public whippings took place would be gruesome but "tend to make the town interesting to visitors". He attends vestry meetings and is a churchman as an agnostic can be. Above all, he takes himself seriously as a magistrate and a Grand Juror, and is rewarded by "some horrid cases" from time to time. He considers that "Capital Punishment operates as a deterrent from deliberate crime against life to an extent that no other form of punishment can rival" - there is thought behind that "deliberate" - he adds that "the question of the moral right of a community to inflict that punishment" is a hard one.

There are over 700 letters in this volume, and their editing is done with impeccable. It is also inclusive. The age of the picture postcard has come, and several are reproduced. One, from Hardy to his sister Katharine, presents, we are told, the Parable of the Leaven. In communication is compressed in these words: "Fine weather. Windy."

marriage to turn out the same way as Barrie's own. Connolly has little to say about the marital relationship; the remainder of Jerome's literary career consisted largely of the writing of innumerable but sometimes commercially successful plays, of which *The Pursuing of the Third Luck* (1917) is the only one now remembered. (The play, from Connolly's description, could very well have been the work of Barrie in his *My Rose* period.)

Connolly does try to lighten the dullness of his task by telling the story in a pastiche of Jerome's own comic style, at times with quite felicitous effect. Messrs Matthew and Green take the same approach in the voluminous notes in their annotated *Three Men*, making all their information as palatable as possible. And yet there is something curiously humorous about what they have done. Take, for example, the passage in the first chapter where Jerome describes going to the British Museum, reading a medical textbook, becoming convinced that he has every disease under the sun, consulting a doctor, and being sent off to a chemist with what proves to be an extraordinary prescription. All this is accompanied by notes telling us: 1. That Jerome might have met Karl Marx in the Reading Room. 2. That the medical textbook could probably have been *Black's Medical Dictionary*. 3. That the nearest chemists to Jerome's lodgings at that time were Savory and Moore of Bond Street and John Bell and Squier's of Oxford Street. There are also elaborate (and serious) notes on the various diseases from which Jerome facetiously supposes himself to be suffering - typhoid, Bright's Disease, cholera, diphtheria, gout, and others.

Is all this an elaborate joke? The notes seem more reasonable - and there is no annotation at all to the celebrated Uncle Podger episode, or did he have some basic history or family history? Thames' history and river-lore are dealt with exhaustively, and with scrupulous accuracy, by Matthew and Green; but there is little that does not appear in one or other of the existing books on the river, and may be remarked that Thames enthusiasts will already have seen many of the engravings and photographs of the river in Jerome's day, with which the Matthew Green edition is lavishly decorated. In R. B. Boland's *Vicarious on the Thames* (1974).

Viewpoint: politics and performance

David Edgar

A few months ago, there was a review of the dramatization of George Steiner's novel *The Portage to San Cristobal of A.H.* by Victoria Radin in the *Observer*, which contained the (to me extraordinary) assertion that "no one will ever be able to explain rationally the Nazi Holocaust... the why doesn't matter now; the fact does". Thinking about contemporary political theatre in Britain, I keep coming back to that remark, because it seems to me that what binds together my generation of playwrights - who started writing at about the time of the abolition of censorship in 1968 - is an almost unhealthy obsession with explaining things, and, particularly, with explaining those big public events which have created our contemporary public world. It was therefore distressing to be told that such a project was apparently fruitless from the start. But I think I understand why.

First of all, there is a generation of playwrights in Britain who have common concerns, most of whom are affected by one another's work. Second, most of the new playwrights of the 1970s came into the theatre at a time when there was a consensus between play-makers and their audiences that British society was rotten at the root, and that it was the proper business of the theatre to anatomize its rottenness and point the way to radical change. And third, such a view of things appeared to flower in a hundred and one different ways during this period. I lived in the late 1960s and early 1970s in Bradford, which played host to a veritable Kew Gardens of exotic theatrical blooms, both home-grown and imported, during the two immensely successful Bradford Festivals. Here, performance artists careered round the city on pink bicycles ridden in Red Arrow formation; there, Howard Brenton's *Scott of the Antarctic* was performed in an ice-rink, with Tim Davies playing the part of the Devil, and myself assaying the smaller but no less exacting role of the Almighty; somewhere else Portnoble Theatre was presenting an early David Hare or Snob Wilson, Welfare State were enacting a pagan child's naming ceremony with real goats; and Albert Hunt's College of Art Theatre Group was staging a full-scale mock up of an American Presidential Election - with a live elephant - in the streets of the city. And in clubs and pubs, agit-prop groups were relating contemporary labour history, and joining. In their own way, the general and universal call for the overthrow of all fixed things.

As the 1970s progressed, however, this fragile unity between street-theatre, social realism, agit-prop and performance art - or, put another way, between the political, university and art college traditions - began to splinter. The influence on the work of theatrical groups like Portable Theatre drained away, and the performance art groups themselves developed their own circuits and their own devotees. Further, the agit-prop groups - those who saw the proper function of their craft as to induce people to vote on the progressive side at the next county council elections - became separated from those who saw the business of play-making in a loss measurably utilitarian light. Some writers in this second category began to see their work performed on large, centrally heated stages, in the provinces and in London, and even at the National Theatre itself.

Such divisions, however, had little effect on the growing audience for the new theatre; an audience that was drawn largely from the same generation, and which was soon employed, by and large, in the social or educational sectors of the public service, or in political pressure groups, or in the media; and was large enough to sustain the mushrooming number of theatres. It was not, however, large enough or rich enough to create, on its own, the audience for a new radical work in the great institutional theatres. Politically radical work of such scope could only be sustained if there was a consensus among the mass audience that the ideals of egalitarianism

collectivism were at least morally superior to the alternative ideologies on aesthetic offer, that such ideals were, if nothing else, the ethical common sense of the age. While that was the case in the mid-1970s, the capture of the commanding heights of the moral economy, first by the individualist right and then by the consensual centre, changed the attitude of the playing middle class towards the new radical theatre from one of nervous acquiescence to one of impatient rejection.

This did not mean that our great stages were suddenly flooded with right-wing plays; what happened in general was an altogether more subtle privatization of concern, which reflected the way in which the political and social aspirations of the 1960s had become personalized and thus rendered harmless in the 1970s, as the "we" decade turned into the "me" decade, and the pot generation matured into the Perrier Generation. So by 1980, the demand was no longer for plays about the masses resisting the disempowerment of class or racial oppression, but for drama which dealt instead with individual cripples overcoming literal disabilities. In New York and then in London, the wheelchair, or at the very least the crutch, seemed to become a compulsory theatrical prop; perhaps the paradigm was the unexpected Broadway success of Lanford Wilson's *The Fifth of July*, in which the hero is a homosexual, legless Vietnam War veteran, who achieves personal growth through teaching dumb children to speak. Elsewhere, the moored protagonist appeared in *The Elephant Men* (the deformed), *Dead for One and Who's Life is it Anyway?* (the paralysed), *Children of a Lesser God* (the deaf), and, indeed, *Nicholas Nickleby* (the retarded).

There seems little evidence that the playing class is likely to flock back to plays which demand its expropriation. In the early 1970s, playwrights viewed the audience as an adversary, and wanted, in Howard Brenton's evocative phrase, "to pierce in their eyeballs", but all that happened was that the public begged for more. Now the audience really is on odyssey: which is one of the reasons why so many of the playwrights of the 1970s are now translating, or adapting, or writing for television, or not writing at all.

I want to discuss some of the strategies that political playwrights have tried, or are trying, or perhaps ought to try, in the project of explaining public events in a privatized age. Inevitably, such debates begin with the question of whether playwrights should present the surface reality of human behaviour, or what they regard as the essence of the condition they're describing: whether the audience is shown the supposedly objective situation, or the subjective

reaction of the participants to it. Clearly agit-prop or cartoon theatre is on the far end of the objective end of that spectrum: the subjective factor is more or less eliminated, in favour of the direct and unambiguous presentation of the playwright's political analysis. Hence, the employer is shown as a Victorian archetype of a downtrodden labourer in cloth cap and waistcoat not because the playmakers are unaware that fashions in dress have changed, but because the essential message is that basic class relationships have not.

It is understandable why this clear, unambiguous and lively form is attractive (and has undergone something of a revival). But I still share David Hare's fundamental reservation: that the form implies that the author has settled the major questions of the story before the play has begun (which accounts paradoxically for the breathless, over-the-top didacticism of most agit-prop plays). The most dynamic moments of most plays occur when the attitudes of the characters, or the audience's attitudes to the characters, undergo a radical change (the first three acts of *King Lear* are all about the growing, ghastly realization that this appalling old man really is more sinned against than sinning). But these changes of attitude cannot and do not work if the dice are so clearly loaded that the truth is really apparent from the start: which is why Brecht deliberately makes his Mother Courage such an attractive and muscular character, so that an audience can share his strong emotional investment in a personality whose terrible miscalculations emerge, like alcohol dripping through charcoal, throughout the entire length of the play.

If agit-prop reveals the objective at the expense of the subjective, then naturalism is at the opposite end of the pole: recognizable surface behaviour is all. The naturalist writer speaks merely to produce a replica of observed reality; as George Steiner remarks, he "looks upon the world as upon a warehouse of whose contents he must make a foverish inventory". But of course the project of being no more than a camera lens is doomed from the start: because the photograph must be chopped somewhere, the stocktaking must begin and end at some point or another, and the object to be replicated must be chosen from the infinity of objects in the world. What has made the hidden subjectivities of naturalism much more important than the form's aspiration to objective vision is that naturalism has become the dominant form of the world's dominant dramatic medium, and that thereby the world-view of television soap opera - that life is a continuous, endlessly repeated series of equivalent domestic conflicts and reconciliations, as predictable and unchanging as the cogs and wheels of a clock - informs and indeed subverts the way we judge

naturalist endeavours of a much more serious kind.

I have thought for a long time that social realism provides a kind of unilinear synthesis between the super-subjectivism of agit-prop, the super-objectivism of agit-prop. To explain public life in the theatre, it is first necessary to be recognizable, and only then, having won the audience's trust, to place those recognizable phenomena within the context of a perceived social truth. In my play *Desire*, I included a scene where a group of people met together to form a branch of a neo-fascist party. The characters were carefully selected to be representative of the various different groups and interests I thought likely to support a fascist movement in contemporary Britain, and at the end of the scene a leader of the party made a speech in which he brought together all of the disparate and indeed contradictory interests and fears of his audience, weaving them neatly into the classic Nazi conspiracy theory of history. On the page, I'm sure the scene looked as if it had been written from a chort, which, as it happens, was the case. But on the stage, I think what happened was that the recognizability of the characters in that situation - the draughty hall, the empty seats, the feed-back microphone, the echoing silences, and agonizing crossed purposes - gave flesh and substance to my analysis of their actual and subsequent behaviour, and the hopes and fears of the real people portrayed combined with the hopes and fears of the real people watching to create a genuinely mutual understanding of why they came and why they stayed, which it is the unique capacity of the theatre to create.

In other words, there is life in social realism yet. Indeed, it is perhaps the only current form of political theatre that appears to be able to survive a period in which political ideas in the theatre are so deeply resented. Critics are, by and large, undisciplined as theorists of the art they review, but they do have a kind of primitive, instinctual horse-sense about what audiences are thinking, and the hemming they have recently given Howard Brenton, Howard Barker and Edward Bond demonstrates that powerful metaphor alone cannot lend credibility to unpopular ideas. The injunction I take from the critics today is this: Let us, if we must, ontomize Reagan, see what breeds about his heart; but only on the basis of sound factual research.

And yet, if I think back over my last twelve or so years of playwriting, the things I remember are the moments when the iron discipline of social realism crooked apart, the muscles moved by the music, because it wasn't the realization that neither the Jews nor their guards had to do it either, and that guilt is basically a mechanism for people to convince themselves that they have no choice about how they behave.

C. P. Taylor's *Good* is about guilt and choice as well, and concerns a young German liberal who starts hearing hands playing in his head at the time of the Nazi seizure of power, and whose long march from alarm and disgust to complicity and finally to total complicity is punctuated by the music he thinks he is hearing, which effortlessly adds to his own individual progress the progress of the German nation, through its music, towards the barbarism of the Holocaust.

By employing the same metaphor in very different ways, both Taylor and Simmonds somehow manage to break through the walls of the specific to the general, and to explain the collective consciousness of both persecutor and persecuted on the stage. To quote the shattering last line of Taylor's play, as his hero arrives at the gates of Auschwitz and still thinks he's hearing Schubert in his head, and then realizes that for the first time he has: "The important thing was... that the band was real."

This is an edited version of a talk given at the Annual Conference of the Political Studies Association and subsequently at the English Faculty of Oxford University, earlier this year.

Fee

It was proposed by a champion of the BBC. (All widows having or wanting something in common). That the widow of Portsmouth was no different from the widow of Buenos Aires. Like death, the news is immune to nationality.

Answer came promptly that difference there was - The widow of Portsmouth had paid a fee to the BBC. Thus the bon mot of a champion of the House, One bearing a wretched name, one known for aspiet.

As they must know, these various women, Such tolls ensure we all sleep safely in our beds, alone or otherwise. Our famous beds, made for sleeping safely in. Once television has closed our eyes.

And those who are widowed into figures of speech Are still required to pay the licence fee. It is wit that needs no licence, where words are free, Repit it free and easy.

D. J. Enright



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CHATTO & WINDUS

commentary

Ancient and modern moralities

Simon Berry

Fringe Theatre
Edinburgh Festival

"Professionalism" is the word on the lips of observers at this year's Edinburgh Festival Fringe. It is not yet clear whether it refers to the standard of production, to the look of the posters and publicity hand-outs or even to the actors' wage packets. Obviously a substantial amount of money has been hazarded this time, particularly in two complexes of venues which between them offer eight auditoriums and the potential of selling a quarter of all Fringe tickets on offer on any particular day. These commercially-backed "umbrellas", which take on something of the role of impresarios, have made life tougher for the small companies. The lazy reviewer no longer troubles to enter dank Masonic Lodges in search of the best. This is probably misguided: even *The Scotsman's* team of three dozen stalwarts cover only two-thirds of the 800 shows, so others always have the chance of making a discovery.

Of course, it is the talent and/or enthusiasm of the performers that make the Fringe so exhilarating for those who come to stand and stare. But serious Fringe-goers have needed exceptional stamina too this year. I was kept from my bed until 2 a.m. by the fascination of a guided walk in the footsteps of Burke and Hare, knowing that I had tickets in my pocket for medieval drama at 10 o'clock the same morning.

The Travesty is still situated in Burke's and Hare's old stamping ground, the Grassmarket, although the new director, Peter Lichterfeld, is looking for bigger premises yet again. Amongst this year's offerings are three well-mad plays, the most intriguing of which is Andrew Dailmeyer's *The Boys in the Backroom*. Based on a conspiracy theory of global dimensions it bounds from one breathtaking revelation to another. The play's characters include nearly every protagonist from Hitler to Onassis (played by a cast of six, including the playwright) and they treat the audience as a kind of confessional. "History ... does not reveal causes. It presents only a blank succession of unexplained events."

To tie up such enigmas as the disappearance of Howard Hughes, the Kennedy assassinations, the Vietnam War and Watergate, Dailmeyer brings in the Spear of Destiny, used to bring Christ's side but found in Hitler's bunker and handed down to a succession of willing recipients unwire of the danger to its possessor. Full-blooded performances make this witty modern morality play compulsory. Neil Cunningham has Onassis to the fingertips (he is also incredibly convincing in *Heidi Dahl's* pun-filled tribute to the surrealist master) and Jeffrey Chavkin gives a hilarious picture of Nixon unceremoniously springing the traps he had set to catch his political enemies.

At the Assembly Rooms, a venue complex with an 80-seat theatre, there were performances by the Navy Theatre, from the Indian heartlands, *Charau the Thief* uses traditional forms of Sanskrit drama with the improvised dialogue and song of folk theatre. Under the inspired direction of Habib Tanvir, who has been recruiting singers, dancers and story-tellers from the Medhya Pradesh district since 1959, the story of a thief who promises to tell the truth comes over with enormous energy. Western assumptions of what constitutes good acting are challenged by both the improvisatory manner and the self-absorption in these performances. Qualities we might associate only with children's theatre. My enjoyment was increased by some sharp and establishment developments in the story. Charan and the policeman eventually decide to reconcile their differences and agree to share the spoils.

The small resident company at Edinburgh's community-based Theatre Workshop put on a production that has already toured community centres earlier in the year. *The Year of the Cabbage*, written by Tom Lannon, who is himself disabled, makes its audience uncomfortable for the best of reasons. Written as a sour talepiece to the Year of the Disabled, it shows the indignities that an uncomprehending society still imposes upon them. More damningly, Lannon depicts the patronizing assumptions of health and social work professionals who wield such power over the lives of the disabled. This is a model of persuasive agitprop in its original stark touring version, adroitly directed by Andy Arnold.

The Medieval Players can appeal both to an academic interest in pre-Shakespearean theatre and also to a childish delight in juggling, jilting and jousting. Their company style is based on the strolling players, and their repertoire embraces the whole gamut of medieval drama from moralities to farces, with accompanying music on authentic period instruments. John Heywood's *The Pardoner and the Friar* (which borrows fifty lines from *The Pardoner's Tale*) consists of a violent verbal contest, conducted around and among the audience, ending up as a physical free-for-all on the open booth and trestle stage. Edwin Morgan's modern English version of the fifteenth-century Dutch morality play, *The Apple Tree*, provides idiomatic verse dialogue which allows the actors to concentrate on the mummery at the heart of this edifying entertainment. Faith under adversity is rewarded, the Lord giving a peasant couple an apple tree with amazing adhesive properties. Among those caught in its branches are a loutish Death and a lecherous Devil, both of whom agree to leave the couple alone if they are released. Faith and riches are thereby seen to flourish side by side, a self-righteous message which is nicely undermined in the play.

Probably the strongest meat was provided by Hull Truck Theatre Company's *Diary of a Hunger Strike*. This has the entirely justifiable aim of giving an inside view of the "dirty" protests and ensuing hunger strikes over the issue of political status for the Republican inmates of the H Block. Disdaining to pander to ghoulish playwrights Peter Sheridan has to work hard to gain our sympathy to the cause. The two IRA sympathisers are revealed shockingly naked and smeared with excrement, the last shreds of dignity sacrificed to outrage the prison authorities as much as to gain their demands. Their "Commander" shows the human stature behind the fanaticism when he takes on a young, ambitious minister from the Northern Ireland Office, whose liberal sentiments camouflage a keen sense of the political realities. Real drama is extracted from a Machiavellian conflict where lives become pawns in the game, although the understatement in Pam Brighton's production gives way to a creeping element of melodrama in the second half. After four weeks in the Edinburgh *Diary of a Hunger Strike* goes on tour and will reach the Round House in November.

Last year Glasgow put on a season of alternative theatre over Festival time in the west which the faithful Fringe-goers missing the last year's home. This year's late bus to Glasgow perhaps as a result there are a number of Fringe shows which have already had successful runs in the west. Glasgow Theatre Club brought over a hilarious version of *Female Parts* by Dario Fo and Franca Rame, with Juliet Cadzow triumphantly splitting herself into three women with the same problem: world of Italian sitcom, but cynically locked up in her own and by a lack of the moon and a lack of a male.

heavy breather by slighting the reputation of his mother. The final part, "Same Old Story", gleefully explores the possibilities in a situation where men become pregnant. Juliet Cadzow brings out all the nuance in a scatological Red Riding Hood fairy story, involving a foul-mouthed rag doll and loose-bladder dwarf when, when kissed, turns miraculously into a handsome young electronics engineer.

It is a relief to turn to the world of rural Oxfordshire a hundred years ago, in Keith Dewhurst's adaptation of the first part of *Lark Rise to Candleford*. Margaret Gordon's promenade production with second-year students at the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama is a memorable exercise in audience involvement. Using stage areas against all four walls of the hall, plus the floor space between, the cast show us some beautiful and poignant ensemble playing, interspersed with folk songs and boisterous dancing. The audience is limited to eighty, and willy-nilly, most of them are caught up in the action which swirls around and omits none. This intimacy allows for some fine, unforced performances, most notably Lucy Stewart as the young Laura in a continual state of wonder at the Lark Rise folk.

The most inspiring late night show I saw was *Woza Albert!* at the Traverse.

Author, Author

Competition No 87
Readers are invited to identify the sources of the three quotations which follow and to send us the answers so that they reach this office not later than October 1. A prize of £10 is offered for the first correct set of answers opened on that date, or failing that the most nearly correct — in which case inspired guesswork will also be taken into consideration.

Enrica, marked "Author, Author 87" on the envelope, should be addressed to the Editor, *The Times Literary Supplement*, Priory House, St John's Lane, London EC4M 4BX. The solution and results will appear on October 8.

1 We live in deeds, not years; in thoughts, not in figures; in feelings, not in numbers. We should count time by heart-throbs. He most lives who thinks most, feels the noblest, acts the best.

2 One solace there is for me, sweet but faint, As it floats on the wind of the years, A whisper that spring is the last true And that triumph is born of tears.

3 Of late, when we two met once more, The luminous countenance and rare Shone just as forty years before.

Competitors are also requested to state what the quotations have in common.

Competition No 83
Winner: Gordon Swaine
Answers:
1 Supported by an impregnable sense of justice but still dangerously funny, Lucia went back to her garden room, to tranquillize herself with an hour's practice on the new piano. Very nice tone; she and George would be able to start their musical perhaps, eggs now. This afternoon, if he felt up to it after the tonic. Not a note had she played during that triumphant week at Riseholme. Scales first, then, and presently she was working away at a new

The first professional staging of Borodin's *Prince Igor* since 1937 opens Opera North's season at the Grand Theatre, Leeds, on September 25. David Lloyd-Jones conducts his own new edition of the score; the producer is Steven Manoff and the cast includes Michael Donnelly and Margaret Curran.

With two ten chests and a line of tattered clothing Perry Mwa and Mbwenge Ngeema from Johannesburg's Market Theatre Company create a series of scenes about blacks in today's South Africa. It generates the same sort of fascination in a European audience as the first silent films of Charlie Chaplin. The story is, briefly, that Christ returns to earth at the invitation of the Botswana government, but he is soon overruled having had effect on the coloureds as he is locked up on Robben Island. Escaping (with the help of the archangel Gabriel) he starts walking across the water towards Cape Town, until a helicopter blows them up with a nuclear missile. Three days later Christ appears by the graves of those martyred under apartheid. He calls "Woza" ("What") by each grave before returning to heaven. The laughable story-line serves as a vehicle for some astonishingly earnest young boys swotting flies off his open-air stall, two Johannesburg coal-burners on the back of a lorry, a barber's shop with an amazing young representative of the hunt clippers, an old blind Kaffir trying to thread a needle. As with Nuyin, the performances cast a hypnotic spell, a sense of total illusion all the more powerful because it is so easy for Europeans to see how it is done.

Muzart, which she and George would subsequently read out together.

E. F. Benson, *Mapp and Lucia*, chapter 1.

2 She had spoken to it about George; played his favourite air upon it; sat for long over her book, touching, to the best of her simple wit, melancholy harmonies on its keys, mist weeping over them in a lull. It was not George's relic; it was useless now. The next day but mid Seilly asked her to play. She said it was slopping out of tune, that she had a headache, but she couldn't play.

W. M. Thackeray, *Vanity Fair*, chapter 29.

3 Madame Valotzes continued for a short while of the piano at the romantic composition for four hands trotted off into a series of solo improvisations.

Without turning her straight, and for Mrs Golsion still splendidly elegant, she informed her visitors: "Angelus is the victim of his bicycle. He's practically worn a track, you darling, tramping to the ballroom to the night."

She sounded a final bell and closed the lid of the upright piano.

Patrick White, *The Twyford Affair*, part 1.

Some of the items included:
1982, *Edmund Spenser's 'The Shepherd's Calendar'* by John Gorton
1981, *George Bernard Shaw's 'The Doctor's Dilemma'* by John Gorton
1980, *John Galsworthy's 'The Forsyte Saga'* by John Gorton
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remainders

Eric Korn

I need to know more about the unfortunate N. Macleod, author of *Koren and the last tribes of Israel with Koren, Japanese and Israeli illustrations dedicated to Great Britain, America, Germany, France and the other Teutonic nations of Europe, the supposed representatives of the Royal House of Judah, and the seed only of the Children of Israel the companions...* (there's a lot more to the title but that is the gist of it), published in Yokohama in 1879, along with a curiously illustrated guide book to Japan, obscure threats to his enemies, much self-pity, and advice to Japan on how to become a world power. (Adopt Christianity, fish freezing, scientific division of labour and the Macleod patent lavatory.)

Authorities distinguish him from other N. Macleods, for example the three Norman Macleods, of whom one was tried for high treason and later knighted, while the others were a pair of Scottish divines, father and son, authors respectively of *God's Mercy Manifest in the Expulsion of our parents from the Garden of Eden and Cracks of the Rock for the folk of Kiltra*, two splendidly plinking titles, one of them more or less responsible for the Disruption. The third Norman (editor of *Good Words*, by the way) did venture far enough from Caledonia to write *Peeps at the Orient*, but he seems never to have recovered from the rigours of the trip, and died in 1872, too soon to have been our man, who is identified by the British Library catalogue as "writer of books on Japan", an admission of ignorance.

Macleod tells us a lot about himself, though intelligibility suffers from his and the oriental printers' unkindness with punctuation, and his reluctance ever to finish a sentence. Macleod was a Macleod of Skye, apparently, "poor Mac who refused £30,000 bribe to betray his prince, a fine bimbo de gozarimashio, as it is too far north for the golden calf to travel, the navy is Brittonia's wooden walls, but the Macs of Dunvegan".

Most of his later troubles are described in the preface, a six-hundred-word gallop from indent to full stop. Since the writers arrived in Japan in 1867 during the last shoguns reign he has devoted a great part of his time and his available means to travel and research... often without a single dollar in his pocket, when the exchequer was full, when necessary he travelled in state, landed Japanese asked him for an extra outboard, the Japanese asked him if he was travelling at government expense, as if one could not travel, nor have the public without having the credit of paying for it... when the funds were lower he travelled by horse and kango, and which they were down to zaro he stroda shunks mare, the good steed King David rode when he slew the Philistine giant, twice he was deprived of the root of all evil, by fire and shipwreck the only times he was uninsured having allowed the policy to lapse... and when laid up in Osaka, however, a few hundred copies of his first work were stolen from his publisher in Nagasaki, who left for Australia, and hawked in Japan by a foreigner at half price, and his booksellers wrote him that a heathen Chinese is doing the same thing with his last work in China, and to crown all he lately received the Job's comforting intelligence from his booksellers in Hongkong that they had come to grief after having made the best sales of his last three works... [307 words omitted]... this present edition... as good and ready a style as its predecessors.

N. Macleod is also notable for his verse: King David's seed, transplanted root of Jepson noble vine, Whose boughs spread forth to Celestia's regal shore, Hor fruit a race of Kings and rulers bore, Whose seed will sit on many a throne, Reloing from the tropic to the torrid Zone, Her prosperous sons are found in nearly every clime.

And will be to the end of time, And not till she her final course has run, Will Judah's Royal banner sink beneath a never setting sun.

Then there's a lot of stuff about P and O and the prophet Ezekiel, and

railway shares and mineral rights and the treasure of Solomon's temple found in Jin Mu Tenn's grave, and how to foster the fledgling Mitsa Babi company and thereby "grant both Japan and foreigners all that was required for their mutual benefit by which the sun would never set on the dominions of Dui Nipon, as well as cure her of a long standing foreign bowel complaint".

The rising sun rises: I don't know about the bowel complaint; but I hope Macleod made out all right.

Something of a bench mark in eudystylography, or creative misprinting, was established recently by our daily contemporary *The* — name, but it was published in 1879. It was a chafal piece, in

The —'s unmistakable tone of amused tolerance (the tone of Mediterranean holiday postcards from friends who have a nip of the Méro in their kitchen) and it concerned an Indian chelme megastar or gigastar who recently underwent emergency surgery for a ruptured intestine, escorted by the prayers of the multitudes who follow his films, (or "films" as they are called here, a curious reference, I suppose, to Nine Elms, the site of London's wholesale fruit and vegetable market).

After discussing his performance, aharisma, illness and blessed recovery, the item concluded waggishly that, appropriately, he had ventured his intentions in a film fight, and it was a while before the camera crew realized he wasn't acting. The curious Gallic phrase ("MM the tourists are amiable invited to venture their intentions at our luxuous Casino") arrested me: I haven't space to reproduce the painstaking process of observation, hypothesis, inductive leap and confirmatory test by which I came to realize that "he ventured his intentions" was actually a misprint for "he ruptured his intestines". Then fell like some watcher of the skies, or perhaps more like Ventris and Chadwick as it gradually became clear that the exotic forms of Linear B concealed communications in familiar old bibble-and-squeak.

Since the film-fans numbered not millions or billions but hundreds of millions it would be best to call him not mega-or-giga-star, but core-star, that homid Hindi multiplier for 10⁶, a square lakh, or lakh of lakhs (an Indian Don Juan would be called lakhshis). More often, unfortunately, careful proof-reading removes nice line about a man in a novel who was going through the Change of Wife, which got corrected to Change of Life. And you can't make a reference to Michael Footle or Margaret Thrasher; the latter gets corrected to Mergale Thrasher, a species of shark. Nor can you hope to get across conceals about where Alf the seared riveler ran down to the Bishop of Dmbechester, used to complain a funless see.

Samuel Butler thought it would be droll to ask "But does not Tenyson say 'Tis better to have loved and lost than never to have loved at all?'". And so, in the second edition of *The Way of All Flesh*, he does: "In the first, it was amended by 'some cultured printer's head, who had too obviously taken to heart Lord Salisbury's recommendation to verify your references'". There's a whole class of froty jokes with one layer less of irony than the material they are ironing, like those who speak of "the not-so-sensitave" of monon (pig-iron for want of a better name) is familiar from *Private Eye's* "Pseud's Corner" which suffers from a sort of axiomatic disability, the objection that the lesser wit cannot embrace the greater, nor the lens-hood photograph the cinema.

I'm not of that enthusiastic about our British legislators, but at least they don't try to poison us directly. Whereas here is a handbook of congressional

recipes, and not the first ("a second smorgasbord" not says); the official title is *What's Cooking in Congress*, written and published by a life-affirming couple called Marian and Harry Barba, who are jointly, I guess, "Clarian Creative Press - Books (The Workshop Under the Sky) of Saratoga Springs." Parentheses not mine.

Harlan Creative Press - Books have also published 3 by Harry Barba (novellas), 3x3 by Barba and friends, *One of a Kind* by Barba, *The Day the World Went Sane* (described as "a novellette and a play") and *The Case for Socially-Functional Art, Education and Culture*. There are also the Harlan Creative Awards, so getting fifty senators, sixty representatives, a deceased senator, a congressman's spouse and two presidential press officers to describe their favourite food is by way of relaxation.

But not without significance. "It is in the heat of this very real kitchen of life," says the editor's introduction, entitled by happy invention "Barbaucus", "that Americans become non-partisan in the fullest sense of the word." But not non-political. Whether incumbent or retired (Barba uses "ex officio" to mean "out of office") they are still in it, as is unreadable as a cuneiform inscription. The book is *On the Principles of Political Economy and Taxation*, by David Ricardo, Esq., Second Edition, London: John Murray, Albemarle Street, 1819. It has a back and covers of green leather - is in excellent condition (never having been read) and it is really beautifully printed. I do like David Ricardo, Esq. No publisher dare write Michael Arlen Esq., or even Rudyard Kipling Esq., today. The book is on offer at one shilling.

The *Private Papers of a Bankrupt Bookseller*. Cope 1931 (reissue 1940). Lot 457, Ricardo D. On the Principles of Political Economy and Taxation, second edition, Subsums, £528 (ie £480 + £48 premium). Sotheby's, April 27, 1982.

The author of *The Private Papers* (and their sequel, *The Bankrupt Bookseller Speaks Again*) was one William Young Darling, later Sir William Young Darling, who wrote, under the various pseudonyms of "Timoleon", Peter Goggs, Charles Cavers and Penelope Pritter, *Should the House of Lords be Abolished?*, *King's Cross to Waverley and Hither, the Ladies*. He wasn't noticeably a bookseller, and was about as far from bankruptcy as it is possible to get, being a Director, later Extraordinary Director, of the Royal Bank of Scotland. The thought strikes me that he may have known more about Ricardo than he let on.

Deep offence has been caused by volume III of the Supplement to the *OED* in the palm-fringed paradise of Andhra Pradesh, choicest stretch of India's coral strand, where there is a heartless welcome to the weary weary traveller. "A heartless welcome for the weary weary traveller," say the tourist bureau signs, in English as well as the local Dravidian language with an attractive script that appears to be applied to the page with a cake-icing bag, has given us, copra, tea, and possibly Digilawny, and is clearly not a tourist to be sneezed at, a risky activity at the best of times. The Andhra Pradesh Tourist Bureau assures the English-language announcements by who check the text by rendering it back into the vernacular. Such a person is properly known as a remalayalamer, and may be said to know his job backwards and forwards. They are, or Oxford, one of the chief attractions: "Visit Cochin, home of the world's largest palindromes".

Now here is a recent booklist: *N. Naray: Teach Yourself Information* (EUP 1976). *A. Burgess: Earthly Powers* (Penguin 1982). *R. G. Finlay: Approaches of the Dead*,

or the following memorably Thribblish (Thribblike, thribbesque, thribblish) lines in Milind Fillmore:

Signing the Fugitive Slave Act Axed the corner of this uninspiring man. His spouse Abigail A former school teacher... The temptation is to quote a whole anthology of first ladies:

His chateleine Louise Only foreign born First lady, played both harp and spinet very well

but I must leave room for the lyrics (alas, I cannot reproduce the music) of James A. Marlin's "America, My Soap". "TWEEN the gold-EN bay, high-ED East-ERN shore lies the LAND of E-VERY people EVER gleen-ing; ten score'n six this re-el-peo of dream-ing, the taste, sp-e-y, soup in per-fect Mix... There is more, but my appetite fails me.

I have another work on political economy, too, of which I am specially proud. It is quite unreadable and I am sure unreadable. I often take it down and look at it. I leave it about to tempt people, but it is as unreadable as a cuneiform inscription. The book is *On the Principles of Political Economy and Taxation*, by David Ricardo, Esq., Second Edition, London: John Murray, Albemarle Street, 1819. It has a back and covers of green leather - is in excellent condition (never having been read) and it is really beautifully printed. I do like David Ricardo, Esq. No publisher dare write Michael Arlen Esq., or even Rudyard Kipling Esq., today. The book is on offer at one shilling.

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Deep offence has been caused by volume III of the Supplement to the *OED* in the palm-fringed paradise of Andhra Pradesh, choicest stretch of India's coral strand, where there is a heartless welcome to the weary weary traveller. "A heartless welcome for the weary weary traveller," say the tourist bureau signs, in English as well as the local Dravidian language with an attractive script that appears to be applied to the page with a cake-icing bag, has given us, copra, tea, and possibly Digilawny, and is clearly not a tourist to be sneezed at, a risky activity at the best of times. The Andhra Pradesh Tourist Bureau assures the English-language announcements by who check the text by rendering it back into the vernacular. Such a person is properly known as a remalayalamer, and may be said to know his job backwards and forwards. They are, or Oxford, one of the chief attractions: "Visit Cochin, home of the world's largest palindromes".

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Cultural History of Ghana by J. Juyee, Collected Epistles of Byron, Lord, Childe Harold's Pilgrimage 1845 (with engravings by G. Rodenberry, Star Trek: The Motion Picture, *Henrietta's Heartache* or *the History of Family Life* (p. 22).

If this sounds omnivorous, that's all it is part of the diet of a six-month-old Boris, but this is too far for Russian *brat*, a sound used to have wailed his confusion if his memory is functioning. His name being on a level with the middle-aged standard knockcase, and having a *horror vacui*, tends to be books to list as a lamp files (as files, as butter files).

But since (as those of the house who oppose my plan to have his annotated list to decide which of some urgency to decide which his teeth will turn next. When he eaten only the Burgess and the deduced that his method of Chubuk collection, and the six copies Chubuk's *Menorah* (as seen when he ate the anonymous *Henrietta* wondered if he was giving me a clue to the authorship (Joyce Cary, *Clare de Vau*, Dr Cubmes). But his meal (marking end inwardly) was Steinbeck's *Cannery Row*, suitably pinyppish book, you think, loquacious, goodhearted, in bit soft) which only made sense if was working through some bit of canine index which cross-referenced titles and authors, like the old about Mill on Liberty with Dine and Flimsy which members of the Society of Imlexers (did you know there was Whentley Medal for an Outland Imlex?) assure me never happen dismissing it as a mere *canine* to Curand, Enchain; ditto, mere orange, M'Y or Old Wives Tale *Wives' Tale*, The sec Bennett, *Good Arnold*; see also *Pecic*, G. *Imlexers* O.M., Imlex).

It's perhaps relevant to mention the *Cannery Row* was the first *London* (1945), rubber-stamped "cannery" edition from the rear (reproduction) with the ticket of *The People's Bookshop*, Johannesburg. This edition is a rare if trivial variant, which I have been hoping to sell for a notional sum to a Monterey collector (completeist is bookman's euphemism for "mimnmaniac"). Of course the absence of a dust-wrapper might deter me (I mean the *people's* Californian, not the Borzoi, who demonstrably indifferent to presence or absence of wrapper, having done his Baconian reading macth a full dog.

Finucane, new and wrapped, and the Byrnn, jackerless from *Red* though otherwise a particularly fresh example - maybe its freshness attracted him - of the Victorian dec cloth).

Well, some books are to be read and some few to be chewed and digested; but I was most but - and was he - by the danger to *Henrietta's* pretty little parody of the *secret memoir genre* with *dipt* illustrations in the style of *De* which I have found in no catalogue of bibliographies. It has, I consider, "Hall and Farewell" by Hugh Walpole and is presumably entirely by him, and would thus be an exciting acquisition for a Walpole collector, if it were such a thing.

By the time the habit is acquired (we are trying powdered dogpaw to the spino and electrobook on the paws) there should be an impressive eclectic list, and I intend to catalogue with the title "dogpaw dogged". But friends in the trade suggest I should describe the remainder of my stock as "books dog wouldn't touch".

Let it be remembered, too, that *OED* is above all the scholarly possession of English (not German, French, Physics, etc) departments throughout the world; and of other lexicographers, (of course). It is

The OED

Sir, - How disappointing that the generous space you gave to a review (September 3) of the latest volume of a Supplement to the *OED* was squandered by somebody who disapproves in principle of alphabetized dictionaries at any level whatever.

Roy Harris implicitly rejects all generalizing about language use which, extraordinarily, he thinks precludes belief in "varying shades of semantic grey", an extreme simplistic position which neither Sir James Murray nor any present Oxford lexicographer ever held. The dictionary for which he makes an impassioned plea, which would fully describe "the very complex social and situational diversification of English", "the Englishman's vocabulary and his wife's, or his daughter's", would either be of infinite extent or of such a degree of particularization with respect to persons, times and places, as to be of no use or interest at all. And if one must generalize, a structuralist's generalization depends on several factors just as the traditional lexicographer's does: on evidence that has been collected - evidence which must still largely be taken from printed sources (great novels down to drive level), though of course modern technology puts other resources at any editor's disposal; on reducing the language to "a clearly determinate number of verbal meanings"; on analysing words and uses that the lexicographer "never knew or used or saw before"; and on an interlocking system that is inevitably a theoretical construct, because the subsystems of the individual are infinitely variable and can never coincide with the total system revealed by the lexicographer's accumulated data.

Roy Harris nowhere in two TLS pages gives an inkling of what kind of a word his substitute for a dictionary would be. Perhaps it would in some ways resemble a thesaurus of synonymy, with all the concomitant complications of cross-referencing and indexing. Anyway, he gives us no reason to believe that his method would deal with the overwhelming practical complexities of general lexicography at the level of the *OED* (there are 154 sections, and within them numberless subsections, in the entry for *the* verb *set*, and more to come in volume 4 of the Supplement). The existing building, it seems, in all its Gothic splendour, is to be demolished, leaving a dreaming professor of linguistics to turn over the rubble.

The Professor's indignation or "blasphemous impetuosity" is also exercised over the policies governing inclusion and exclusion of items and the choice of particular descriptive labels. But the literary preferences of the *OED* and its supplementary volumes are not put forward at the expense of the nonce innovations of reporters writing for a local paper (newspapers from Morecambe, Milton Keynes, Aberdeen, Nottingham, and many other places in this country and throughout the world, are very well represented in the supplementary volumes), or civil servants drafting documents, or the novelties of "ordinary people" who ever he might think they are). These, as even a short examination of the vast *OED* files would show, are far too numerous for inclusion in any dictionary, however large. It is merely Harris's absurdly unsubstantiated inference that lexicographers believe that the world at large has "no business introducing new words at all, however useful". In fact if new words or meanings are truly useful they will generally be taken up by others and so merit inclusion under the normal criteria of frequency and establishment. The choice is not between some or all such nonce-formations, but between some or none.

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mostly by-passed or ignored in the chilly semi-scientific works of professors of linguistics. Unfortunately "ordinary people" do not normally consult it but make do with derivative or smaller dictionaries. The supplementary volumes of the *OED*, like the parent work, register the strange and idiosyncratic language of the poets so that future generations of scholars will know what the words mean and where they occur. Sir James Murray and his colleagues have enriched the lives of generations of scholars all over the world interested in and deriving pleasure from the rare words of writers of former ages. The *hapax legomena* represent no more than the agreeable "hundreds and thousands" on top of an iced cake, but they help to make the cake what it should be.

The vast quotation files in the *OED* Department also form the basis of editorial judgments about the acceptability of uses labelled erroneous, catchwords or the like. These judgments are not wild stab in the dark, though they may appear so to the limited vision of one reviewer in his quotationless study. The *OED* and supplementary volumes represent not just the knowledge of any individual, but decades of accumulated evidence of usage and of public attitudes and declarations, of the skill and knowledge of numerous lexicographers, and of the freely given comments and advice of scholars and well-wishers throughout the world. Lexicography at this level is a cumulative and corporate exercise. A single structuralist, in the dimness of his study, cannot see the structure, and never will be able to.

When people like Professor Harris have finished ignoring the *OED* and bring out their new construction kits, I suspect that they will attempt to build a thematic barn, with unalphabetized bins and stalls for kinship terms, colour words and vocabulary from the other closed system they love so much. If these notional builders ever look up from their unconstructed barn, they might begin to be a little impressed by the castle of the *OED*, *entia genera* of the work of giants, as the Anglo-Saxons would have called it, and might just wonder if their small hammers and nails might prove to be inadequate for such a task.

ROBERT BURCHFIELD.
Oxford University Press, 37a St Giles, Oxford.

to the editor

In fact, he only says "the celebrated Martin Heidegger, star pupil of the Jew Husserl, and himself later involved with Nazism". The depth of his involvement has been played down by his many philosophical admirers, but it can be estimated by reading the very rare book, consisting only of documents without a commentary, from which the photograph reproduced on this page is taken: Guido Schneeberger, *Nachlese zu Heidegger*.

The popularity of Hannah Arendt among the intellectuals of her time illustrates Julien Benda's thesis of *La tradition des clercs* - the treason of the intellectuals. This treason is their romantic attempt to be cleverer than reason itself and to extol romanticism from a philosophy of nostalgia to a philosophy of power, the power of unreason. (Today they attack reason by associating it with the atom bomb.)

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the fifteenth of October 1764, in the close of evening, as I sat musing in the Church of the Zoccolanti or Franciscan friars, while they were singing Vespers in the Temple of Jupiter on the ruins of the Capitol.

In the second version he stated: It was on the fifteenth of October, in the gloom of evening, as I sat musing on the Capitol, while the barefooted friars were chanting their litanies in the temple of Jupiter, that I conceived my first thought of my history

And in the third Gibbon wrote: It was at Rome, on the fifteenth of October, 1764, as I sat musing amidst the ruins of the Capitol while the barefooted friars were singing Vespers in the temple of Jupiter, that the idea of writing the decline and fall of the City first started to my mind.

It is not to deny the interest of Mr Sams's reappraisal of *Edmund Ironside* or the desirability of keeping in open mind no matters connected with the Shakespeare canon. Can any hard evidence be found for the date of the anonymous play's composition?

MacD. P. JACKSON.
English Department, University of Auckland, Auckland, New Zealand.

A Palindrome Conference

Sir, - We have taken a keen interest in the correspondence on palindromes which has appeared in your columns from time to time (for example, the letter in your issue of January 15 this year, concerning the authorship of the well-known palindrome "T. Elliot, top bend, once purld tang emanating, is sad, I'd assign it a name: 'Gnai dirt upset on drab pot tollee'").

Under the heading "Palindromes", the most recent edition of Brewer's *Dictionary of Phrase and Fable* discusses "palindrome dates", such as 27.9.1972. Only three more such dates will occur this century: 28.9.1982, 19.9.1991 and 29.9.1992 (After that, one will have to wait until the twenty-second century for another - 10.1.2101 - unless one is prepared to cheat slightly and allow the somewhat unsatisfactory 10.02.2001.)

September 28, 1982, therefore seems to us a most appropriate date to begin a Palindrome Conference. Those participating will attempt to beat the record for the longest palindrome ever composed, and to outdo in ingeniousness both Alastair Reid (the composer of "T. Elliot... etc") and the anonymous inventor of the palindromes listed by Lord Norwich in his *Christmas Cracker* for 1971, such as "Now stop, Major-General: are negro jampots won?"

Those wishing to participate in the Conference should write to us immediately.

EDWARD LLEWELLYN.
Plas Llewellyn Arts International, Llewellyn Group, Plas Llewellyn, St. Neerrot Falls, Gwent, Wales.

Helcule Poilok
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JANET MORGAN.
Home Cuck, Elbfeld, Oxfordshire.

More letters appear on p 974.

been recently described for the first time by Matthew Baillie (1761-1823), who with Clive had also attended Gibbon in the last few weeks of his life. Fluid was aspirated on three occasions, with twelve pints drawn off on January 13, 1794. On January 16, Gibbon woke feeling better than for some time, but then abdominal pain set in and he died from general peritonitis "with only his servant present, peaceful in mind and in full possession of his mental faculties".

MILO KEYNES.
3 Brunswick Walk, Cambridge.

'Edmund Ironside'

Sir, - In his elegantly written piece on *Edmund Ironside* (August 13) Eric Sams mentions that in 1963 I drew attention to a Shakespearean image-cluster in the play. But even twenty years ago I was cagey enough to offer alternative interpretations of my discovery, saying that it "may be thought of either as supporting Everett's theory or as raising doubts as to the validity of this sort of evidence" for authorship. I went on to cite another Shakespearean image-cluster in Shelley's poem "The Boat on the Scrin".

This is not to deny the interest of Mr Sams's reappraisal of *Edmund Ironside* or the desirability of keeping in open mind no matters connected with the Shakespeare canon. Can any hard evidence be found for the date of the anonymous play's composition?

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JANET MORGAN.
Home Cuck, Elbfeld, Oxfordshire.

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to the editor

Frege's Thought

Sir, - Many of the issues raised by Olbert Harman in his review (April 16) of my two books on Frege, which I have only just had an opportunity to study, are too large, and too vaguely adumbrated by Harman, to be pursued in correspondence. I pick three about which he is more explicit.

(1) Harman claims that the question whether the complexity of a sentence reflects the complexity of the thought it expresses, or serves in some other way to determine what thought is being expressed, is without substance. His ground is that abstract objects like thoughts and numbers do not literally have parts. If he were right, this would furnish a strong answer to those I was criticizing for attributing the second view to Frege and denying that he held the first. Thoughts, as Frege conceives them, are, however, unlike numbers in the crucial respect. This is precisely because, for him, the identity of a thought is shown by what is involved in grasping it: no one who has grasped the thought expressed by one sentence and that expressed by another can be in doubt whether they are the same. Hence, although to speak of the parts of a thought is indeed to speak metaphorically, it is a metaphor on which Frege insisted: the internal structure of a thought is that which it must be apprehended as having by anyone who grasps the thought. If thoughts were not intrinsically complex, or if their complexity bore no relation to the structure of the sentences expressing them, the same thought could be expressed by sentences with wholly different structures. It is precisely this which Frege denied. By contrast, there is no sense to asking whether the number ten can be grasped only as the product of two and five, because numbers - as opposed to the senses of numerical expressions - are not grasped. This is why Frege says that the sense of a part of an expression is part of the sense of the whole, although the reference of the part is not part of the reference of the whole. If it is nonsense to speak of the parts of a thought, then much that Frege wrote on the subject is nonsense. I do not think so; but in any case I was concerned with how to interpret Frege.

(2) Harman appears to believe that Kripke has shown that we should be right to say that if Jane Smith had never heard of Harman, of semantics, or of Bressanone, she would nevertheless come to know that Harman was attending a conference on semantics in Bressanone simply by hearing someone say, "Harman is attending a conference in semantics in Bressanone", and having grounds for supposing him to be speaking the truth. Most readers will surely agree with me that she would know more than that. The so-called "Harman" was attending a conference on some subject called "semantics" in a place called "Bressanone". Harman should study his authorities more carefully: the distinction is precisely the same as that drawn by Kripke between knowing that "Horses are called 'horses'" expresses a truth, and knowing the truth that it expresses. Neglect of this distinction is in some contexts fatal.

(3) In defence of Kripke's claims concerning rigid designation, Harman repeats a stock argument, which I met head-on. Suppose that "Pseudo-Dionysius" is introduced as a proper name of whoever wrote a certain treatise. Harman insists that there is a difference in "modal status" between the sentences:

- (a) Pseudo-Dionysius never wrote a line.
(b) The author of the treatise never wrote a line.

It is crucial that these two sentences are themselves unmodalized, viz contain no expression such as "might have" or "possibly". It is also vital to the argument to maintain that the difference between them in modal status does not obtain merely on

Kripke's theory, but would be recognized, in advance of any theory, by anyone who knows the language, and that his recognition of it would manifest an essential ingredient of his knowledge of the language. The difference is supposed to be that the proposition expressed by (a), though false, is not necessarily false, while that expressed by (b) is necessarily false. I defy anyone to make a convincing case that these judgments would be unanimously made by all competent speakers of English uncorrupted by philosophy, and that their doing so would be essential to their mastery of the language. In everyday discourse, we are not much given to assigning modal status - contingency or necessity - to propositions; rather, we import modal verbs or adverbs into our sentences. We do, of course, say things like, "That can't be true"; but that would be a natural comment on the assertion that Pseudo-Dionysius never wrote a line. To make out that such a comment is irrelevant to his theory, Kripke needs to invoke his distinction between epistemic and metaphysical necessity, a distinction of which many ordinary speakers of English are innocent. To convey the sense in which the assertion of (a) may be rated as only contingently false, one would have to resort to saying, for example

(c) Pseudo-Dionysius might have died in infancy.

This will probably not produce a conviction of the relevant difference between (a) and (b), since

(d) The author of the treatise might have died in infancy looks true, too: further doctrine has now to be invoked to explain this way. It would not matter, indeed, if (d) were unhesitatingly recognized by everyone as false: for we should, in this way, have justified our according a distinct modal status to the two unmodalized sentences (c) and (d). Only on the strength of the difference in truth-value between the modalized ones (a) and (b) is it, in my view, simply silly to claim, as an essential ingredient of an ordinary understanding of the sentences (a) and (b), a recognition of a difference in respect of modal status: to do so is to confuse a particular theory with the facts of ordinary linguistic practice which the theory seeks to explain.

MICHAEL DUMMETT,
New College, Oxford.

Tipu's Tiger

Sir, - Tipu's Tiger, illustrated in your issue of August 8, is more than a painted wooden effigy. The body of the tiger contains a growl and scream mechanism operated by turning a handle which pumps bellows. Tipu, the Sultan of the Mysore, was reported to be so delighted with this toy that he "passed hours in his music room with an attendant turning the handle of the machine". This unusual machine, now in the Victoria and Albert Museum, is fully described in *Clockwork Music* by Arthur Ord-Hume, who restored it. The V & A publish a colour poster which shows that the golden tiger has his fur arranged in a sort of foliate leaf pattern. The victim of his attention, measuring 5ft 10in, may be Dutch.

MADEAU STEWART,
3 Lawrence Lane, Burford, Oxfordshire.

Rochester and Quarles

Sir, - In his *Attribution in Restoration Poetry* David Vieth discusses the "unsolved problem of ownership" presented by the poem "On Rome's Pardon", which first appeared in the pirated *Poems on several occasions by the Right Honourable, the E. of Rochester* (1680). Vieth summarizes the evidence and concludes "I am not convinced that [Rochester] wrote it".

One piece of evidence Vieth did not consider is that "On Rome's Pardon" is a reworking of a poem in Francis Quarles's *Divine Fancies* [1632] 3. 86:

On Rome's pardon

If Rome could pardon sins, as Romans hold,
And if such Pardons might be bought for Gold,
An easie Judgement might determine which
To choose: To be religious, or else rich;
Nay Rome does pardon: Pardons may be sold;
We'll search no Scriptures; But the Mines, for Gold.

The 1680 version attributed to Rochester:

If Rome can pardon Sins, as Romans hold,
And if those Pardons, can be bought and sold,
It were no Sin, I adore and worship Gold.

If they can purchase Pardons with a Sum,
For Sins they may commit in time to come,
And for Sins past, 'tis very well for Rome.

At this rate they are happy:st that have
They'll purchase Heav'n, at their own proper cost,
Alas! the Poor! all that are so are lost.

Whence came this knock, or when did it begin?
What Author have they, or who brought it in?
Did Christ, e're keep a Custom-house for Sin?

Some subtle Devil, without more ado:
Did certainly this sly invention brew,
To gull 'em of their Souls, and Money too.

The discovery of the Quarles original paradoxically strengthens Rochester's claim for the reworking. Some critics, notably V. de Sola Pinto and Anne Barton, have argued that we should credit Rochester with the variation on Quarles's "Why dost thou shade thy lovely face?" (Emblems 1635, 3.7) - significantly also in rhymed triplets. Rochester used rhymed triplets in "Upon Nothing" and Harold Love has pointed out to me that Quarles uses the form in *Emblems* 3. 12, 3. 13 and 4. 13, as well as 3. 7; and also that 2. 15 of the *Divine Fancies* contains germs for "Upon Nothing".

KEITH WALKER,
Department of English, University College London, Gower Street London WC1.

B. B. Tomashevsky

Sir, - In Henry Gifford's review of *Angliyskaya poeziya v russkikh perevodakh: XIV-XIX veky* edited by M. P. Alekseyev, V. V. Zakharov and B. B. Tomashevsky (August 13) there is an annoying mistake which is very often made in Western countries and sometimes even in Russian. Gifford writes, "This anthology includes three of Donne's *Songs and Sonnets* (two in apt versions by one of its editors, Boris Tomashevsky, the eminent Pushkin scholar)"; here, Gifford mixes up two Tomashevskys. The eminent Pushkin scholar was Boris Viktorovich Tomashevsky who died in 1957, while one of the editors of the reviewed anthology and the author of two translations from Donne is Boris Borisovich Tomashevsky, a son of Boris Viktorovich Tomashevsky. B. B. Tomashevsky was never a Pushkin scholar, although he was an eminent translator of English and American poetry and prose, and also an outstanding editor of English and American literature in Russia. He died in 1974.

GEORGE BEN,
7 Brondesbury Park, London NW6.

In Humphrey Carpenter's review of *The Letters of Tom Brown* by Isabel Quigly (TLS, July 25) the date of William Adams's *The Cherry Stones* has been wrongly printed as 1815; it should have been 1851.

Among this week's contributors

PETES AVEY is the author of *Modern Iran, 1965*, and the translator of *The Rubā'idī of Omar Khayyām*, 1979.

RICHARD BROWN is co-editor of *The James Joyce Broadsheet*.

ALAN BROWNJOHN's most recent collection of poems is *A Night in the Gazebo*, 1981.

BILL BUFOSO is Editor of *Granta*.

HUMPHREY CARPENTER's biography of W. H. Auden was published last year.

JOHN CASEY is the author of *The Language of Criticism*, 1966.

DAVID EDOAR's most recent work for the stage was his adaptation of *Nicholas Nickleby*.

D. J. ENRIOT's *Collected Poems* appeared earlier this year.

SIR JOHN HACKETT's *The Third World War: The Untold Story* was reviewed in last week's issue.

C. J. HAYWOOD is a lecturer in the history of the Near and Middle East at the School of Oriental and African Studies.

JAMES HUNTER is the author of *The Making of the Crofting Community*, 1976.

JAMES JOLL's books include *Intellectuals in Politics*, 1960, and *Grassroots*, 1977.

HUGH KENNEDY is the author of *The Early Abbasid Caliphate*, 1981.

ERIC KORN is an antiquarian bookseller.

PETER LIENHARDT is the author of *The Medicine Man - Swifa Ya Ngumali*, 1968.

MALCOLM MALLETT's books include *Mercenaries and their Masters: Warfare in Renaissance Italy*, 1973.

EDWARD MORTIMER is the author of *The Tunes. His Faith and Power in the Politics of Islam* will be published in October.

ROBIN OSTLE edited *Studies in Modern Arabic Literature*, 1976.

ROGER OWEN is the author of *The Middle East in the World Economy, 1800-1914*, 1981.

LOUIS PARRY's collection of essays *Hand to Mouth* was published earlier this year.

S. S. PRAWER's *Heine's Jewish Comedy* will be published later this year.

J. I. M. STEWART's new novel, *A Villa in France*, will be published in October.

AHOAF SOUFEI is a lecturer in English Literature at the University of Cairo. A collection of her short stories will be published in Britain next spring.

J. P. SULLIVAN's books include *Properly*, 1976.

MALCOLM VALE is the author of *Woe and Chivalry*, 1981.

P. J. VATTIOTIS's books include *The Modern History of Egypt*, 1968.

J. K. L. WALKER's novels include *Horse Latitudes*, 1966.

CHRIS WALLACE-CRABBE's books include *The Emotions Are Not Skilled Workers*, 1980, and *Splinters*, 1981.

MALCOLM YAPP's most recent book is *Strategies of British India: Iran and Afghanistan 1798-1850*, 1980.

Fifty years on: Stella Gibbons

The TLS of September 8, 1932, carried the following review of *Cold Comfort Farm* by Stella Gibbons:

It is to be hoped that all the tenants and owners of starved and benighted farms, and all those stark and powerful realists who write of country life, and that of Sussex in particular, as mildewed with perversion and illegitimacy, will pay close attention to *Cold Comfort Farm*, by Stella Gibbons (Longmans, 7s.6d. net), and feel a new hope and happiness dawning even from Sussex. Unlike many satirists and mockers, Miss Gibbons has a definite remedy to suggest for each and every ill that is developed by the farming families of fiction. She brings about a revolution in *Cold Comfort Farm* before she is done with it and makes no secret of the formula.

It is quite true that the earthy and passionate novel was parodied, and

Miss Gibbons with a wicked and witty pen has seen to it that all the peculiarities of the drearier back-to-the-land school have been ridiculed. She has jumbled her own together, but like well-made strawberry jam they bob about whole and recognizable in her bubbling pot: the writer who deals wholesale in insanity and keeps a horrid old woman immured in a dismal room to goad on her mad family to desperation, the writer who describes tedious manin and hell-fire sects meeting in "a sort of dog kennel," and all the other earnest expositions of breeding, the mother-complex, savage bulls and mares larger than life, who fall into the duck pond, her book is burlesque but it is also a good story; neither her invention nor her even good sense fall halfway, and the end is quite as lively and amusing as the beginning.

Information, please

Sir Compton Mackenzie: documents, personal reminiscences etc sought; for a biography to be published by Chatto and Windus.

Isle Martin, by Ullapool, Ross-shire, IV26 2TN.

Romantic Parodies 1797-1832: this selection of parodies of the English Romantic Poets, is nearing completion; any information about little-known parodies which may not have come to your attention.

David A. Kent, D. R. Ewen, Department of English, York University, Downsview, Ontario M3J 1P3.

Henry Sweet (1845-1912), philologist and phonetician: autograph material sought; for a biography.

M. K. C. MacMahon, Department of Linguistics and Phonetics, The University, Glasgow G12 8QQ.

Nicholas Venetie, late seventeenth-century French physician, author of *De la génération de l'homme, ou l'art de l'amour conjugal*, any information about Venetie or his book for an edition of his English

translation, *The Art of Conjugate Love Revealed*.

R. S. Porter, Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine, 183 Euston Road, London NW1 2BP.

*Beatrice Haydon (1864-1930): information, papers, pictures and reminiscences sought; also copies of her books and information about whereabouts of her manuscript, particularly that of *Ships that Pass in the Night*.*

Clifford K. Westgate Jr, 9226 W. Golf Road, Des Plaines, Illinois 60016.

Derek Jackson (1906-82): personal reminiscences of him and his wife sought; particularly from their school days and their time as undergraduates at Cambridge; for a memoir.

Diana Mosley, Temple de la Gloire, 91400 Ormoy, France.

Lady Rachel Russell (1636-1728): originals of her letters written 1672-1682 and first printed by Mary Barry in 1819.

Lots G. Schwoerer, George Washington University, Washington, DC 20052.

LITERATURE

The comprehensive ideal

John Casey

PIERS GRAY
T. S. Eliot's Intellectual and Poetic Development 1909-1932
273pp. Brighton: Harvester Press.
£22.50.
07108 0046 0

Lucretius and Dante each wrote a poetic masterpiece that also expressed a system of philosophy. The achievement is as rare as the ambition is common. Wordsworth never wrote his philosophical poem; and Johnson said of Pope's *Essay on Man* that "never was penury of knowledge and vigour of sentiment so happily disguised". The professional philosopher who is also a great poet is one of the rarest of beings.

T. S. Eliot was a professional philosopher in the modern, academic sense of the term. His thesis on F. H. Bradley, several philosophical articles, a Harvard seminar paper, "The Interpretation of primitive ritual" (much of which is published for the first time in Piers Gray's book), strongly suggest that he could have had a distinguished career as an academic philosopher, had he not chosen a better course.

The pioneer work on Eliot's philosophy and its pervasive presence in his poetry was done by Hugh Kenner in *The Invisible Poet* and there is not a very great deal of importance to be added. What Dr Gray has done, with skill and delicacy, is to show in much more detail how the poetry and criticism in the period up to and including *The Waste Land* reflects Eliot's philosophical ideas, and how Eliot's critical language is redolent of the concepts of philosophical Idealism.

Eliot's uncertainty about belief and poetry probably stems from the very philosophical tradition in which he was educated. It is the common doctrine of Idealism that the possibilities of thought determine the possibilities of experience. "Facts" are interpretations of experience from particular "points of view". Hence it will be natural for an Idealist philosopher to hold that the coherence and objectivity of the world as human beings construct and interpret it will be guaranteed only by the cooperative endeavour of a human community which unites all "points of

view" into a comprehensive whole. Another characteristic Idealist doctrine - that truth is a matter of "coherence" among propositions rather than of "correspondence" between particular propositions and particular states of affairs - will go with this. The complete truth will be the complete coherence, the largest comprehensiveness of points of view. This comprehensiveness will seek also to relate the present to the past. The human cooperative endeavour to produce a coherent world, and to relate past to present, might result in a "tradition". The idea of tradition - a live and practical sense of the relation of our lives to those of our ancestors - will become pivotal in our understanding of human society and human knowledge. It was F. H. Bradley - Eliot's philosophical Master - who defined history as the expression of the "human tradition".

Eliot's most famous essay is "Tradition and the Individual Talent". In that essay he sets out an ideal of order and comprehensiveness expressed in extravagant terms:

No poet, no artist of any sort, has his complete meaning alone. . . . The existing monuments form an ideal order among themselves, which is modified by the introduction of the new . . . work of art among them, if ever so slightly, is altered.

It is often not appreciated how unconvulsive, indeed how subversive Eliot's idea of tradition is. The whole existing order is altered by the really new work of art. The present alters the past just as the past influences the present. Eliot's idea of tradition is wholly anti-historical. We create the past from a sense of what can be done in the present. Eliot wishes to see the whole of European literature as part of a timeless present. In this he is

very close to Ezra Pound who wrote, in *The Spirit of Romance*, of a literature "where the real time is independent of the apparent, and where many dead men are our grandchildren's contemporaries, while many of our contemporaries have already been gathered into Abraham's bosom, or some more fitting receptacle". Eliot's claim for tradition is that it enables a critic to have a "perception of relation that involves an organized view of the whole course of European poetry from Homer". And if one takes that claim seriously it will be very natural to derive it from a philosophical standpoint - in this case what F. H. Bradley says in his influential essay "The Presuppositions of Critical History":

every man's present standpoint ought to determine his belief in respect to all past events; but to no man do I dictate what his present standpoint ought to be. *Consistency* is the word that I have emphasized.

The trouble is that neither Eliot nor Pound really attempted, as critics, to combine their sense of what it was possible for the individual talent to make new with that ideal completeness that would make it possible for a poet to write with the whole of literature from Homer in his bones. The past they give us is extremely selective, even fragmentary. Eliot's relative lack of interest in the Romantics, in Pope, in Milton, and, for that matter, in Shakespeare - all suggests a sense of the past that is guided less by an ideal of comprehensiveness, and much more by his central creative interests. Matthew Arnold who, with his "touchstones", produced a comparably "timeless" notion of literary tradition, and who attempted to place the English Romantics within a classical tradition of "high seriousness" - to see them as modern classics - produced a picture of the past

and its existence in the present that is much more acceptable to the conventional literary historian.

Piers Gray relates Eliot's ideas of criticism to his poetry, and sets both against the ideal of "comprehensiveness" implied by the Idealist tradition. He moves rather directly from the poetry to the philosophy - for instance reading *The Waste Land* as expressing a search for "an absolute degree of comprehensiveness". The trouble with looking for such a direct relation is that it leads one to read the poem as simply ironic: what we are shown is a gap between the actual experience of modern man and a postulated ideal of comprehensiveness. And it is true that the poem opens with an allusion to Chaucer's *Prologue*, as well as to the late Latin poem *Perigrinus Veneris* - poems which enset an awareness of the mind of Europe and of our own country: ("April is the cruellest month, breeding / Lilies out of the dead land".) It is true also that the "mind of Europe" rapidly degenerates into the mind of *Minel Escapra*, helpless individuals helplessly reliving their personal memories: ("And when we were children, staying at the archduke's, / My cousin's, he took out on a sled, / And I was frightened.") But the contrast between the fragmentary modern experience and a postulated ideal unity does not produce simply a painful irony. The contrast between horrible or painful scenes in the present - the neurotically Cleopatra, the seduced typist - and eloquent versions of them from Shakespeare or Sappho dramatizes the present and gives it an intense vitality. Eliot is doing what he learned from the French Symbolists - finding the greatest possible intensity in the imagery of modern life. The gap between the fragmentary and "high comprehensiveness" in his poetry has a quite different character - it is much more complex than - an analogous gap between incomplete and complete experience as this is understood by philosophy. That is to say, poetry that is ambivalent about such a disparity, whereas Idealist philosophy is governed by a much simpler notion of "comprehensiveness". In philosophy the fully comprehensive is the fully real; whereas in *The Waste Land* the vitality of the fragmentary is itself fully real.

Dr Gray does not entirely escape the danger of simplifying Eliot as a poet by seeing him as making poetry out of, or into, a philosophy. For instance he uses a psychological argument from Janet about "double selves" to conclude that Prufrock ("Let us go then, you and I . . .") is in a "Hell of loneliness". Yet surely "Prufrock" has no burden as simple as that. As much as anything else it is a poem about poetic language itself, about the possibility of using Victorian magniloquence to express almost nothing at all, a poem that is playfully ambivalent about the seriousness of Prufrock's predicament. That the protagonist's self-consciousness may be painful is not something that needs to be suppressed - but nor need his absurdity be suppressed.

However if Dr Gray as a critic sometimes oversimplifies, this is because he has a proper anxiety to bring out Eliot's philosophical convictions as clearly as possible. And what emerges is a much stronger sense than we had before of how profoundly imbued with philosophy is Eliot's imagination, both as critic and poet; how Eliot never simply forsook his philosophical inheritance, but took it into his central creative interests; and how the philosophical traditions of Royce and Bradley - unlike modern analytical philosophy - can enter into a man's creative imagination and form his culture.

Such circumstances Miller is unwilling to provide, preferring to seduce his reader into a vision of the world as an endless display of repetitions; either of the first or of the second kind. As a critic of the novels he deals with, he is concerned not so much to press home his reading but to question the possibility of a conclusive or dominant understanding and to leave the books "open" to further investigation.

These aims he may certainly be said to have achieved. But there are those readers of English fiction for whom the lack of philosophical self-questioning in literary criticism has never been a pressing problem; to such readers it will seem that apparent simplicities have been converted into deep mysteries here, without a clearly defined gain. Such readers may feel that in the self-sustaining quality of the argument and in the elevation of critical "openness" useful and far from pernicious procedures of literary critical validation are neglected almost beyond recall.

The contributors to the May issue of the *Journal of Modern Literature* (Temple University Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 33), include Jessica Prinz Pecorino, on Pound's *Foundations*; Carlos and the visual art of Archile C. Laine; on Joyce's use of collage in "Agallus"; Milton J. Bates, on early influences on Wallace Stevens; Robert W. Lewis on Hemingway in Italy; Joan Bobbitt, on the *Diary of Anais Nin*; Sheryl S. Pearson, on Graham Greene in Mexico and D. Barto Johnson, on Nabokov's *Invitation*.

Retelling the same old story

Richard Brown

J. HILLIS MILLER
Fiction and Repetition: Seven English Novels
230pp. Oxford: Blackwell. £12.50.
0631 13032 2

The introductory chapter of J. Hillis Miller's new book establishes a distinction of considerable subtlety and philosophic seriousness between two forms of repetition. The first "Platonic", or "Biblical" form sees the world as a series of copies stemming from original and ineluctable archetypes; the second "post-Nietzschean" kind sees a world where things are fundamentally disparate but may seem to repeat each other, as it were, coincidentally. The distinction is offered as a decisive one and yet both forms of repetition, we are told to our consternation, may function simultaneously or indifferently in any of the novels that are to be discussed.

The second part of the introduction is more of an apologia: a personal and professional affirmation of the value of reading literary works and a resolution to test out the deconstructive anquiries of the past few years by an exploration of the kinds of readings of fiction that they have made possible. This may seem a familiar appeal, but it is one that has a peculiar resonance and an affecting nakedness of tone coming, as it does here, *ex cathedra* from the Delphi of deconstruction at Yale.

The as-yet-undeconstructed reader (or the reader who is searching for ways to become deconstructed) may take encouragement from this latter part of the chapter and hope for much from the essays on seven well-known nineteenth and twentieth-century novels which follow.

There is an element of familiarity in the approaches Hillis Miller adopts. Conrad's *Lord Jim* is discussed in terms of the aliveness and mystery of its central character and in terms of the shifting perspectives of its narrative structure that have struck all its critics as crucial. If *Lord Jim* is a novel full of "beliefs", then *Wuthering Heights* is full of "listeners", who, like Lockwood

may be seen as "emblems" of the reader's situation. Thackeray's *Henry Esmond* is brought into play through the Oedipal suggestiveness of its plot, its narrative status as a supposed reminiscence told in the third person, and through its persistent irony. The famous implicit seduction scene in *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* is given a new treatment, and, in *Mrs Dalloway* and *Between the Acts*, problems of consciousness, of female identity and of the opposition between creative unification and dispersal so characteristic of Woolf's fiction are invoked.

Sceptical readers will be reassured by these vestiges of traditional criticism and they may be tempted to value the readings offered for their quality of thoughtfulness, imagination and critical insight, much as if deconstruction had never been thought of. But this is only a small part of the story for the critical readings are not isolated essays but part of a broader attempt to investigate the function of repetition in fiction. Both the kind of repetitions discussed and the manner of their treatment, though they will amaze and delight a certain kind of reader, will do little to appease the spokesman for traditional forms of literary criticism and scholarship.

Rather than naming, classifying and putting into historical order different types of repetition in fiction, or seeking out blatant repetitive devices (like the word-for-word repetition of the first paragraph of George Moore's *Endless Waters* in its pre-sentimental chapter, or that Borges story "The Plot", which is pared down to two re-creating paragraphs), Miller defies classificatory and historical expectations. His procedure is to take what he finds in these seven great novels and artfully accommodate it to his theme.

Repetition is discovered in multiple recounting of the same events by one narrator or by many; it may arise when elements in a romantic scope, experienced by one generation of characters in a novel are echoed in romances of the next generation; it may consist in a potentially significant likeness of names between characters, in the deliberate recurrence of motifs or in the repetition of apparently trivial details like the colour red. It may

consist in the way that a novel repeats its effect on reader after reader; the way that a novelist returns to favourite themes in several works; the way that a plot may recall earlier plots, like the Oedipus story. We are even asked to see a form of repetition in the novel's re-presentation of events or supposed events in the world. When reading a novel, Miller claims, we are competent to deal with all these levels of repetition at the same time, and we certainly need to have this kind of competence to get through his study.

Each novel is presented as an interlocking texture of repetitions: not mere rhetorical tropes which may be classified and identified as subsidiary to the novel's main drift, but themselves determining the possibilities for the ultimate impossibility of deeper meaning. *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* is no longer "about" the seduction of a village girl, the cruel workings of Fate, turn-of-hoof or whatever one might previously have thought, but is held to be "a novel about repetition". All the novels are held to be "about" repetition. This is a proposition which, on the face of it, has a certain uneasiness, but it is one that Miller makes little real attempt to argue or support, for it is built in to the logic of his approach that not only novels but the whole world may be perceived as a dazzling interplay of likenesses, if we only care to look at it in this way.

Miller's own argument, with its disavowal of conventional forms of historical validation and its refusal of the "empirical" mechanics of categorization and verification, becomes itself an interlocking texture of repetitions. Each of his chapters is its attention to authors like Hardy whom he has investigated so suggestively in the past and also to considerations about narrative, meaning, and transcendence that are reminiscent of his *Forms of Victorian Fiction* and *The Disappearance of God*. Miller consciously exploits the repetitions that may occur in his own writing in order to further his argument and, in this respect, he follows Kierkegaard

Cornell

In June of 1940, the German army moved across France and, rapidly overcoming French resistance, seized Paris. Thus began four years of Nazi occupation. One of the most important, yet least understood French responses to the threat of 1940 was the phenomenon of collaborationism—the acceptance of fascism as an ideology.



"Gordon excels in his description of fascist momentum from Marcel Déat in late 1941, to Jacques Doriot in 1942, to Joseph Darnaud in late 1943, and in a general way from reform and political action to violent anti-Communism, and finally to a mindless activism that subverted order while claiming to defend it... Gordon's book has many striking qualities. It is clearly laid out and it is a mine of information. The political history of collaborationism has now been done." —*Times Literary Supplement*

"Gordon describes the three major and three minor collaborationist groups in France, all of which were ideologically committed to fascism and all of which had sprouted on French soil before the collapse in 1940... Gordon's important book helps to explain an uncomfortable chapter in France's recent past." —*Choice*

"Two strong features of the book are its explanation of the origins and behavior of the collaborationists and the portraits of the major collaborationist leaders... Thoroughly researched and well written." —*History: Reviews of New Books*

"This will be the definitive work on a subject that has only been treated in a cursory manner by historians to date. *Collaborationism in France during the Second World War* is full of sound, often brilliant analysis. Gordon raises important questions on an important subject and answers them with imagination, subtlety, and insight—all based on a thorough mastery of the sources." —Robert Souley, Professor of History, Oberlin College

COLLABORATIONISM IN FRANCE DURING THE SECOND WORLD WAR

By BERTRAM M. GORDON

At bookstores or from
CORNELL UNIVERSITY PRESS
815 House, 37 Dover Street
London, W1X 4HQ
or
P.O. Box 250, Ithaca,
New York 14850

The not so sedulous ape

Thomas A. Sebeok

FRANCINE PATTERSON and
EUGENE LINDEN

The Education of Koko
224pp. Deutsch. £7.95.
0 233 97431 8

The Education of Koko belongs to a still growing genre of literary discourse devoted to "language-endowed" apes. This is encountered in three main though overlapping types (excluding books written for children, such as the outstanding series by Bettyann Kevles): evoked works of fiction, which, in their striving for realism, more or less cunningly intercede the researched with the fabricated; accounts advertised as documentary, but which are, more often than not, peppered with invented data, tempered by the suppression of information, embroidered by cute illustrations throughout, and embellished with overpainted interpretations overall; and the interesting but rather uncommon third category of true confessions. Considered as fiction, the Patterson-Linden book measures up to neither of two recent novels about signing gorillas: John Goulet's brilliantly poetic roman à clef, *The Human Ape* (originally, *OA's Profile*), or Michael Crickton's elaborately pseudo-factual thriller, *Congo*, the anthropoid heroine of which was loosely fashioned after Koko (7LS, July 17, 1981).

Proposed as a transcription of reality, the memoirs of Koko rate far beneath the trio of classics, all recording business consummated before 1950, by Nedra Ladygina Kohns (*Infant Ape*, *Human Child*), Winthrop N. and Louise A. Kellogg (*The Ape and the Child*), and Catherine H. Hayes (*The Ape in our House*). This book completes a new triad of captive Great Ape sagas, arguably accomplishing for gorillas what Maurice K. Temerlin achieved, in 1975, for Pm (in *Lucy*, the name of a chimpanzee now out on parole in Gambia), and Keith Ladler, in 1980, for Pongo (in *The Talking Ape*). One salient feature these three recent books share is the crudely anthropopathic character of their respective protagonists.

All six of the chronicles I have mentioned, as well as Ann J. Premack's *Why Chimps Can Read*, differ from the third type of the genre, far far uniquely exemplified by Herbert S. Terrace's *Nim* (the name of another chimpanzee, lately downgraded to a laboratory subject for tests of a new hepatitis vaccine), with its volta-face conclusion that there is no evidence at all that apes can either generate or interpret sentences. This hardly surprising resolution earned Terrace such epithets as "muddle-headed" (Patterson), "apostate" (Linden), and worse. Terrace's results are, however, in perfect conformity with the long-held judgment of informed linguists, from Max Müller (1889) to Noam Chomsky. They accord equally well with the view of responsible ethologists, such as Konrad Lorenz, who declared, in 1978, "this syntactic language is based on a phylogenetic program evolved exclusively by humans," and that anthropoid apes "give no indication of possessing syntactic language." The eminent Bristol neurophysiologist, Richard Gregory, also concluded, in 1981, that apes do not exhibit either "human language or intellectual ability," and wisely admonished: "There are so many experimental difficulties and possibilities of the animals picking up clues from the experimenters, given unwittingly, that extreme caution is essential." Gregory is, of course, alluding here to the Clever Hans phenomenon, a fallacy by which Koko's entire ten-year curriculum has been errantly tag-ridden; and writing specifically about Koko, Heidi Hediger, the most astute animal behaviourist of our times, observed, in his latest book, "Is it... meine Experimenten der Kluge-Hans-Fehler nach 75 Jahren erneut Triumph feiert?"

Readers acquainted with *The Education of Henry Adams* might be tempted to leap to the conclusion that

The Education of Koko is a numerously endowed gorilla's autobiography, but the silliness of Koko to express language in written form is not as yet included among the several other bizarre claims made on her behalf. But please don't scoff: in 1968, one of Thomas Mann's daughters, Elizabeth Borgese, advanced, in all seriousness, the even more outlandish proposition that her dog, Arli, learned to compose poetry on an Olivetti typewriter; of this English setter's work, a well-known critic of modern poetry had purportedly written: "the poems are charming. I think he has definite affinity with the 'concretist' groups in Brazil, Scotland, and Germany. Has he been in touch with them?" (A specimen of this last group, "I do own", has been interpreted as an anti-war poem.) Since we are repeatedly informed of Koko's predilection for versifying, does it seem unreasonable to expect her to transmute her alleged insight into rhyming (on the order of "You lip slip and bread red head") into parallelisms, not just in evanescent gestures (ie, Amsels), but in the more enduring visual mode, of script?

Apart from Koko's alleged poetic gifts, much is made of her aptitude for lying, which, according to the authors, "of course, is one of those behaviours that shows the power of language". Here, however, lurks a terminological confusion, one that, furthermore, begs the question. Many kinds of animals—the most remarkable case on record is that of the Arctic fox, *Alopex lagopus*—give, or give off, deceptive messages, in a word, prevaricate. But lie must, by definition, be "stated", which Koko simply cannot do.

Since, as Philip Lieberman has cogently argued, non-human primates "could not produce human speech even if they had the neural devices", how, precisely, can Koko be said to talk? Well, she is declared to be "adept at typing on a keyboard-computer assembly linked to a voice synthesizer by pressing buttons on a sturdy console. It is with genuine regret that one learns, however, that since the 'synthesizer' has frequently malfunctioned, and although we have

collected an enormous amount of data, we have not yet had time to analyse Koko's 'spoken' language in detail". (In plain text, this citation means that, since Miss Patterson's connections with Stanford University has been severed, she no longer enjoys free access to its computers.)

The first person singular narrator of this book represents a confluence of two humans into a single persona: Francine Patterson, a tongue-tied psychologist, Koko's surrogate mother and pedagogue, whose voice — considering her confession that she felt that her time "would be much better spent conversing with the gorillas" — is ventriloquially articulated by Eugene Linden, a wrestler-turned-journalist, perhaps best known to the public for his *Apes, Men, & Language* (1974, 1981), surely the most glibly, as well as defensively emotion-laden, popular account of attempts at linguistic communication with any of our collateral ancestral species so far published (particularly when contrasted with the much more sophisticated and fairly balanced report by Adrian Desmond, *The Ape's Reflection* (1979), and even in comparison with Ted Grant's *Apes & Whalespeak* (1981), which whiffles away, trying to offend no one).

A question attributed to Koko epigraphically opens the book, and, at the very same time, epitomizes its obstinate dotness: "Fine animal gorilla" — this being her reply to the question, "Are you an animal or a person?" This exchange implies that Koko rediscovered the Linnean system of classification and nomenclature. To the contrary, as Hediger has patiently explained, the string quoted is a purely human product that having been fed to the gorilla was regurgitated by her, and then reinterpreted as a novel sentence that seemingly originated in her mind. It is a typical illustration of what befalls when the Pathologic Fallacy and Clever Hans fallacy cross-fertilize one another, and the resulting hybrid is further constricted by what the psychologist Paul E. Muhl, in 1956, and many others since, have dubbed the Barnum Fallacy — a phrase

River

Springs of course high up, skittling out from innumerable rifled ridges of virgin timber yet unsupported by woodchippers on the new make, it skirts the ruined vineyards which met phylloxera and came a cropper, sandstone, brown clay, Murray Greys browsing, winds past medical ranches to scrubby suburbs of mudbrick, Volvos and odd, literati hoarding their dirt roads, soon slowly weaves into upper-middle Christendom, and vigorous E. coli, tram, bus and steel bridge salute it, golf, kayaki, the halo of truck tyres, a sloughy under, it quits the palace of education and reform for factories in rusty reef, shored up by protection, factories tooting through the city and real oriental ships weaving its bottom on top as the northern joke says, trying not to be poetical, this is the Yarra, Struttiana, drunk from the Yarra-Yarra by linguistic diminution and colling at last, sandstone into the sea or a gaudy bay to a rippled fashion of dying.

Chris Wallace-Crabbe

Nomadic assets

Peter Lienhardt

WILLIAM LANCASTER

The Rwala Bedouin Today
189pp. Cambridge University Press.
£17.50.
0 521 23877 3

This perceptive and informative book is the result of almost four years' work among the Rwala bedouin, that enormous tribal group which spread over southern Syria, eastern Jordan, the borders of Iraq and the northern desert of Saudi Arabia. The Rwala were the subject of the pioneering researches of the geographer and orientalist Musil, and comparisons with his work add historical depth to William Lancaster's analysis.

Since Musil's time much has changed. Principally, motor transport has reduced the economic value of camels and the military power of bedouin political groups. It has even altered the possibilities of grazing: Lancaster mentions a startling occasion when 90,000 head of sheep were brought in by lorry from all parts of Jordan "to take advantage of (and ruin) a particular bedouin grazing area. In Saudi Arabia, the bedouin are compensated with considerable amounts of money paid out as social welfare and encouraged by generous subsidies to settle and cultivate. But the group Lancaster studied practised self-help by acquiring their own motor transport and engaging in large-scale smuggling.

In his study of the present-day Rwala, Lancaster acknowledges the anthropological influence of Frederik

Barth. He explains that he has concentrated, not on "institutions", but on "processes", approached through the study of "micro-reality". What this amounts to is the study of not so much people's generalizations about what they do — the ostensible social and political system they formulate — as what they actually do in numerous individual cases and situations. Things regarded piecemeal by the people themselves as exceptions to a rule, may prove in the aggregate to bulk so large as to demand a reformulation in which the rule becomes no more than part of the data. Again under Barth's influence, Lancaster proceeds to consider his data in terms of "assets" (including social assets such as marriage connections) and "options".

Choice is not determined by the institution of the patrilineal genealogy, although it will probably be used to "explain" the choice to an outsider. A closer look at the "explanation" reveals its weaknesses and a closer look at micro-reality shows that practical considerations lead to the use of all sorts of relationships, which are seen and used as assets giving access to a wider variety of options than would otherwise have been the case.

This approach will be familiar to anthropologists. It may be thought to prejudice and over-simplify the complexities of human motivation, by an obsession with personal advantage. In Lancaster's case, however, it has led him to a lot of highly interesting and original information.

As far as the Rwala sheikhs are concerned, it is a problem how to reconcile the appearance of strict authority with the egalitarianism of Rwala society. After quoting

draw near to seeing them as individual personalities, the author introduces with an explanation, a categorization, a well-meaning gloss.

But then, I am not sure that Miss Wilan has a great deal of faith in her readers' ability to travel this remote territory without step-by-step assistance from an expert guide. She rarely trusts us to detect parallels, draw conclusions, etc. for ourselves, or even to remember from one page to the next. Such helpfulness tends to clog the narrative, and it certainly levels out any shades of subtleties. In the end, it prohibits us from any close imaginative involvement with the women of Sohar.

This is not to say that we are given too little of a description of Sohar life. On the contrary, details are missed out that no writer of fiction could ever hope to get away with. One particularly striking example is "The Case of Melmona": Melmona is a fourteen-year-old girl whose father suddenly decides to marry her to a respectable and well-off suitor. Both Melmona and her mother are distressed, the mother because she had hoped that her daughter might marry her cousin — who has already asked for her and been turned down by the father on account of his "disposition".

Melmona's distress, as we are told, is simply the distress felt by every girl faced with the prospect of leaving her home and her mother. Melmona marries the man chosen by her father, but on her wedding-night turns out to be a "woman" (ie, not a virgin). This occurrence, although not rare, is infrequent enough to entail disgrace and scandal. Indeed, the groom gets a refund of half the bride-price. And here the story, as told by the anthropologist, ends. The analysis which follows enquires into the motives of fathers in choosing one particular suitor over another, and questions the methodology used to determine these motives. But the dozen or so real-life questions provoked by the story of Melmona are totally ignored. For instance who took Melmona's virginity? Could it have been her "disolute" cousin? Did the mother know? And was that an added reason for her distress? Surely now we can see that Melmona's distress was not merely the conventional emotion it was thought to be. Was it, totally

Lawrence and Glubb with its scepticism Lancaster describes how a non-honoured guest (often associated with non-bendup power) is entertained in great splendour, his every need and whim attended to by a host of slaves and servants.

All these services were performed by the slaves and servants at a sign from the sheikh and every action was carried out promptly. One would have said that they went in fear of their lives if they disobeyed or were even careless. As soon as the visitors had left, it became apparent that the whole scene was a charade designed solely to impress. The slaves lolled in the recently vacated seats, the sheikhs poured their own tea, the servants ate up the tibits or simply left. Later on, when it became obvious that I wasn't worth impressing, I heard the same slaves, those persons of domestic service, telling the sheikh that it was too hot to do what he had asked, he'd have to do it himself.

Once Lancaster was taken for granted by the ordinary bedouin, he encountered comparable practices: old men were listened to politely, but their opinions were judged solely on their merits; women, in private, had a great say in affairs; and girls could take precedence over boys.

Some of Lancaster's most intriguing information concerns women, marriage and relations through women. He describes, for example, all the different motives for which a woman can be supposed to have chosen to wear a new dress; and he discusses the various ways in which women enhance their husbands' reputations, including drawing to the party's attention the generous and virtuous sets which the husband has to

unthinkable that mother and daughter should co-act in the father and thus svent the public shaming of the family? These, surely, are the questions that matter, the real avenues into the life and culture of our "characters".

In spite of such limitations, Miss Wilan does provide insights into the real position of these secluded and segregated women (that is, their position as perceived by themselves); their view of the veil, the degree to which they actually do influence their own lives and the lives of their men, their conception of "honour", their attitude to education and so on. All this is interesting and valuable. It is only a pity that with her curiosity, sympathy and meticulousness, the author could not also have allowed both herself and her reader a little more room for the imagination.

Naila Minal has taken on a daunting task in her *Women in Islam*. She aims to provide not only a history of Muslim women from the time of Muhammad (610 AD) to the present day, but also to grapple with the ideological complexities that have resulted from the confrontation between the newly rediscovered Islamic liberalism on the one hand and the rising tide of neo-fundamentalism on the other. Such an undertaking necessitates that she move swiftly, and from time to time superciliously, but her manner is engaging; she treats us as if we were willing, none-too-bright, students, but a compensation here is that she rarely lets us drift off into boredom. Interesting miniatures and cameos abound and survey-style generalizations are nicely held in check.

Wiebke Walther's approach to this now favoured topic is much more within the classic tradition of Orientalism. Most of the material is derived from Islamic literature and the book is full of translated quotations from Arabic and Persian poetry. The beautiful production — lavishly with illuminated manuscripts, illustrations of ceramics, jewelry, costume, etc. — need not blind us to the solidity of Mr Walther's research and documentation. Our wishes, however, that people (Mr Walther included) would stop referring to Islam as "Mohammedanism" and would learn to spell Muhammad's name with an "h" and not "c".

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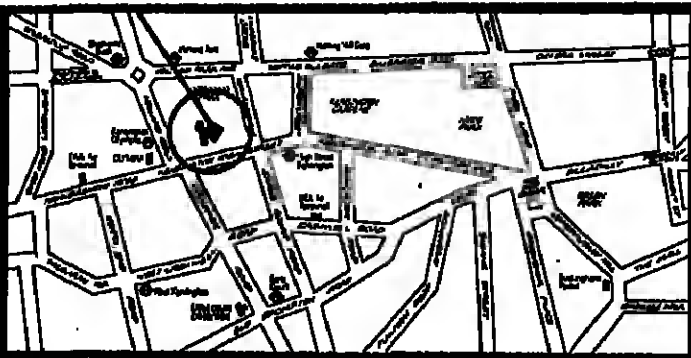
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The way of *infatih*

Roger Owen

MARK N. COOPER

The Transformation of Egypt
278pp. Croom Helm. £13.95.
0 7099 0721 4

The main outlines of the period of rapid change in Egypt's economic and political system usually associated with the name of "infatih" or liberalization are quite well known. They include the opening-up of a strongly centralized economy to private and foreign investment and the transformation of an authoritarian single party régime to one with a limited number of competing parties. It is also well known that the economic and social—not to say personal and psychological—stresses and strains accompanying these changes produced a whole gamut of violent reactions, from the riots of January 1977 to the unprecedented religious tensions which surfaced just before President Sadat's assassination.

And yet, for all its interest and importance, the details of this process have not been described in any work in English, nor its dynamic satisfactorily explained. As a rule it is associated simply with the transition from Nasser to Sadat and, in particular, with the latter's desire to solve Egypt's chronic economic problems with a combination of Arab oil money and American financial and diplomatic support. From this point of view the role of parties and Parliamentary activity often gets reduced to one sort of democratic window-dressing for what was basically the pursuit of an elusive economic miracle.

For Mark Cooper, however, *The Transformation of Egypt* is to be explained mainly in terms of a domestic political dynamic. He begins his story with the economic crisis of the mid-1960s, followed immediately by his comprehensive defeat in the 1967 war. The problems this posed not only stimulated an energetic political debate but also encouraged President Nasser to make a number of concessions to private economic activity as well as to attempt to redefine the relationship between the regime, the Arab Socialist Union and the popularly elected National Assembly.

A form of aspiration

Robin Ostle

ROGER ALLEN

The Arabic Novel: An Historical and Critical Introduction
181pp. Manchester University Press.
£8. 9507885 0 3

In 1913 modern Arabic literature gained its own version of *La Nouvelle Heloise* when the Egyptian author Muhammad Husayn Haykal published *Zaynab*, a novel which was to play a major part in the establishment in the Arab World of this most supple and formless of all literary categories. It was something appropriate that this non-indigenous form should seek to express the dreams and aspirations of the new bourgeoisie who were to embark on the so-called "liberal experiment" in Egypt between the two world wars. It was an age of boundless enthusiasms and limitless horizons, when the key to progress seemed to lie in the ideas, institutions, and educational systems of the European liberal democracies.

The history of the novel in its Arab environment has often seemed as painful and uneasy as those political and cultural forms which accompanied it from Western Europe. It reached a high point in the first phase of its development just at the time when the "liberal experiment" was in the final unedifying stages of political failure, by Adli Khalil, *The Green* (1944) (1946-47) by Louis 'Abid, and the *Khayr al-Khayr* (1945). Nayyima's *Khayr al-Khayr* (1945) and *Midqad Alley* (1947) focus sharply on the poverty and frustration

changes in the source of law and decrees presented to the legislature. His method is particularly well deployed to illustrate the speed at which with which President Sadat secured his own position against the challenge of powerful opponents in May 1971. Unfortunately the price paid for this type of analysis is also the multiplication of charts and tables, which are often no more than an elaborate restatement of the obvious, as well as the use of unnecessary jargon.

Paradoxically, Cooper's method makes the history of Egyptian politics both richer and somehow less exciting. For all his talk of the importance of executive power, the personality of President Sadat sinks into insignificance. He also has no way of capturing the symbolic and emotional importance of such gestures as the destruction of the Secret Police in 1971. More important, for all the talk with which he tries to show the interaction between economic and political interests in the late 1960s, he does not carry this through into the early 1970s, particularly with regard to the various types of forces to be found on the right of the political spectrum and the extent to which their push for reduction in economic controls, the amendment of the Land Reform and the development of a legal system which protected private property against the state involved them in different strategies and relationships. Moreover, Cooper fails to see in enormous importance attached to the elaboration of a system of rules and regulations governing the exercise of ownership and control over private and semi-private organizations which, among many other things, he rocketed lawyers back to their pre-revolutionary eminence as the intermediaries between people of property and the government.

Such trends would have become rather more obvious if Cooper had continued his analysis beyond the turbulent year of 1977. It would have forced him into a less wholehearted commitment of the economic failure of "infatih" by encouraging him to respond to the political ramifications of the period of rapid growth in 1978 and 1979, when money from oil and the remittances of the more than a million Egyptians working abroad produced huge new investments and vast new disturbances.

Implications of these economic pressures for the future of a literary form which, in its golden age of nineteenth-century Europe, seemed to depend strongly on the capacity of individuals to respond positively to self-confidence in the face of the circumstances even when they were unsuccessful at determining their destinies just occasionally Allen suggests rich critical revelations, when he refers to Abd al-Rahman Munif's novel *Endings* as "not a novel of individuals, but of a community in constant struggle with the forces of nature"; the subsequent analysis, however, lacks substance.

The chapter devoted to "literary analysis" of a selection of eight novels written within the last twenty years is also disappointing. While some of Allen's treatments of the chosen novels are critically more informative than others, in most cases extensive paraphrase of the plots is accompanied by relatively little sustained literary criticism. At the beginning of the passage devoted to *Endings*, Allen refers to recent structuralist analysis of pre-Islamic and medieval Arabic poetry which he thinks might be helpful in the discussion of this novel. While he does illustrate its novelistic similarities to the story of the poet, his analysis has little to do with structuralist techniques.

Reservations apart, this is a volume, to be added to the increasing numbers of other worthy studies on a subject which is too important to be left to Arabists whose translations are wider. Western readers to *Al-Nayyima* devote more attention to Allen's literature, only when we have met the translations which reflect the power and intensity of the original creation.

The unincorporate society

P. J. Vatikiotis

CARL F. PETRY

The Civilian Elite of Cairo in the Later Middle Ages
475pp. Princeton University Press.
£25.80.
0 691 053 294

GABRIEL BAER

Fellah and Townsman in the Middle East: Studies in Social History
338pp. Frank Cass. £22.50.
0 7146 3126 4

ROBERT SPRINGBORG

Family Power and Politics in Egypt
279pp. University of Pennsylvania Press. £18.75.
0 8122 7835 6

The study of that curious caste of slave warriors from the Caucasus and Central Asia, who founded the Mamluk dynasties in Egypt (1260-1517), and defended the dominion of Islam against Crusader and Mongol-Tatar invaders from West and East respectively, has attracted generations of scholars. Carl Petry, however, in *The Civilian Elite of Cairo in the Later Middle Ages* attempts, perhaps for the first time, to reconstruct a picture of the civilian elite which served these rulers: executive administrators, accountants, tax collectors, secretaries, jurists, religious teachers and functionaries. The relation between military (Mamluk) ruler-patron and civilian bureaucrat-client has long been known to scholars. What Petry does in this sensible study is to examine one critical period in the later Middle Ages and document it in a monograph.

Since the Mamluk institution was based on a caste of slave warriors, tension and factionalism engendered endemic internal strife. The whole system of power, concentrated as it was in Cairo, was precarious and volatile. There was no rural aristocracy to counter or balance this essentially military ruling institution. A combination of ambition and force was the passport to power. Not only ruling, but any state office remained precarious. While the rulers remained separate from the subjects, their relation to their civilian officials was one of convenience. The latter were wholly dependent on the Mamluk emirs, and they survived in office only so long as they benefited their patrons. In doing so, however, they could and did improve their own material condition and social status. This poor economic relationship, as well as poor economic conditions in the country, especially in the fifteenth century, hampered the effective operation of the bureaucracy, staffed as it was mainly by ulama (men learned in the religious law and sciences).

Petry describes the civilian elite as a religious-academic. To discussing its features, functions and organization, he seeks to establish its geographical origins and explain why more of them came from or concentrated in certain urban centres. He finds both internal and external reasons for the movements of this vast number of literate Muslims to Mamluk Cairo from Syria, Iran, Anatolia and North Africa. Economic and cultural conditions in the countryside throughout the Islamic world were not conducive to the life of a religious scholar. Moreover, the seat of power was exclusively in a few cities and, in the case of Mamluk Egypt, in Cairo. In eastern lands especially, the external threat of invasion and devastation led many of these learned men seeking state office to move to more stable environments.

By the fifteenth century, a cosmopolitan Islamic bureaucratic "class" had converged on Mamluk Cairo. It was according to Petry, a "learned class with common values deriving from religious consensus, and the uniform training of its members." The bureaucrats, among them, were collectors who became clients of Mamluk patrons. As such, the relationship was symbiotic and therefore ephemeral: they did not

enjoy any autonomy. The jurists-scholars, on the other hand, enjoyed great moral authority but could hardly influence society beyond maintaining the orthodoxy of the faith. Religious functionaries, more remote from central authority and more widely dispersed among the lower classes in town and country, were the least powerful but at the same time had the most influence with the people. They offered the masses a basis of social cohesiveness, comfort in the face of adversity, a sense of community and permanence so as to be able to endure the oppressiveness of the Mamluk régime.

The picture that emerges is of a civilian elite who were "servants" of the rulers, not wielders of any power. They could neither eliminate oppression nor alter the political order in any fundamental way. Authority and power remained concentrated at the top: none of it was granted through charter, even though its exercise could be delegated from above for specific purposes. The political order was essentially characterized by grades of subordination in an unincorporate society, lacking all forms of distribution of power among institutions other than the ruling military elite.

The unincorporate nature of society is further illustrated in Gabriel Baer's *Fellah and Townsman in the Middle East*, whose main theme is the rural-urban dichotomy which results from the cultural, economic and political gulf separating peasant from townsman. Consisting of a collection of essays (most of them published previously), the volume treats the problem of village and city in Egypt and Syria from the Ottoman occupation to the twentieth century, the structure and functions of Turkish guilds, and peasant rebellions. It is a logical sequel to Professor Baer's earlier collection of essays, *Studies in the Social History of Egypt*, and his other works on landownership and the guilds in Egypt.

Like Petry, Baer emphasizes the city as the exclusive administrative centre and seat of power: "No one belonging to the ruling institution ever lived in the village." Similarly, all institutions of learning were concentrated in the city. But, unlike Petry, he gives reasons for the lack of urbanization, especially in the seventeenth century. Using a little known seventeenth-century satirical work by an Egyptian, al-Shirbi, Baer develops the sources of conflict between fellah and townsman. He rejects the argument put forward recently by Iro Lapidus to the contrary by insisting that the rural-urban dichotomy was not a remnant of the past but a new phenomenon. The cosmopolitanism of the town, even in the seventeenth century (comprising rulers, ulama, merchants and people of different cultural backgrounds) was in stark contrast to the village or province. He is particularly good on the weak economic connection between town and village, where, until the nineteenth century, there were hardly any landowners and where no commerce was conducted. Rural, urban trade also suffered because of poor communications and lack of security. Even the sole administrative link between town and village, the tax-farmer, lived in the city. Official guardians of religious orthodoxy, moreover, left the countryside to the less orthodox and brotherhoods.

Baer's and Petry's books are complementary in one significant respect. Village and town were not and are not integrated into an overarching social body. The absence of rural notables who can challenge the rule of the city is paralleled by the lack of a corporate urban society with an independent administration. Urban-rural struggles may have been rare, but so have been alliances between rural and urban societies against the central power.

Paradoxically, the urban-rural dichotomy grew with nineteenth-century modernization, even though the shift to a cash-crop agriculture established stronger connections between village and urban merchants and financial institutions, while the expansion of transport led to the rise of provincial towns. However, modern education, health services, and administrative structures tend to be concentrated in the city, thus widening the cultural gap between town and the city, where secular education and

A twentieth-century lion rug from the Fars province of Iran: an illustration from *Oriental Rugs: Care and Repair by Mojib Amini* (128pp. Orbis. £10. 0 85015 293 4).

country. Large-scale migration from village to town in the twentieth century did not lead to effective urbanization but to the ruralization of cities. In short, the lack of a country-based gentry and urban bourgeoisie thwarted the rise of a corporate society. Even the rise of landownership in the nineteenth century, and the decline of the guilds later did not help. The one simply resulted in landowners living in the city, and the other opened up a free labour market to peasants migrating to the town. Since modernization meant greater centralization, the net effect was greater control of the country by the city. Even in Syria and southern Palestine, where rural lords lived and dominated parts of the countryside from where they could clash with the city, new forms of taxation and greater centralization diminished their influence. In fact, stronger central government undermined all local autonomy.

Instances of urban revolt and rural rebellion further support the thesis of an unincorporate society. In the town, it was usually the poorer strata of society rebelling against famine or oppressive taxation, or over sectarian differences. Their leaders were not from the upper reaches of the ulama (these always supported established power) but from among the lower ranks of religious functionaries. In the countryside, peasants rebelled against taxation, conscription and forced labour, and usually when central government was weak as in the last years of Muhammad Ali's reign (1846-49), during political turmoil (1877-82) and after natural disasters ranging from drought to epidemics and famines. Significantly, these rebellions had no ideological or social direction: they were over aimed at changing the government or ruler, but only against a particular policy. Professor Baer singles out one important exception, the 1858 Kharawad rebellion in Lebanon which smacked of class conflict. However the 1919 revolt in Egypt, the 1925 rebellion in Syria and the 1936 revolt in Palestine were political uprisings: the political objectives of which were set by urban politicians.

In the absence of a class of wealthy or even landowning middle peasants, a strong central government was able to localize rural rebellions. The urban-rural link forged to 1919 against British rule in Egypt was transient and based on disparate motives. The new class of wealthy landowners instead established strong economic and political links with the city to become the new political elite. It was not until the 1950s that inequities in land ownership became the source of rural unrest, and even then a city elite introduced measures of land reform.

Robert Springborg's study of one Egyptian family, the Mareis of Azziza in the Delta, further corroborates the domination of the village by the city. Emphasized by Petry and Baer, the conclusion that in such a society, the attainment of state or political power is a prerequisite of the acquisition of wealth and not the other way round. Upward mobility is via movement to the city, where secular education and

state power lie. It was thus imperative for the ambitious Mareis, such as Sayyed Marei, to achieve urban professional status if they were to enter national politics (which indicates the absence—or at least the precariousness—of an effective rural notability). Essentially a study of Sayyed Marei's political career, which began in Parliament in the 1940s under the Nasser and Sadat régimes, *Family Power and Politics* illustrates the importance in Egyptian politics of family connections, marriage alliances, professional competence and the crucial role of such sub-groups as one's university graduating class. But this may be only true of an individual such as Sayyed Marei with a particular talent for manipulation. It is however true to say that much of Egyptian politics, especially since 1952, has been conducted on the basis of the *shilla* (one's old gang), the *daf'a* (one's

graduating class) and the patron-client relations these can establish and promote.

Family Power and Politics, however, does not explain why one can still count on one's relatives, why so much importance is still attached to landownership, why the family is still "the preeminent network" for economic opportunities, or why allegiance to the family takes precedence over larger, impersonal institutions. There are also several errors, such as King Hussein of Jordan's first wife being named as "Dunya" instead of "Dina", Giancles, the famous wine grower in Egypt, becoming "Giangles", Ibrahim Abdel Hady, Prime Minister in 1948-49, being described as plain "Ibrahim Hady", Wing Commander Hasan Ibrahim as a lieutenant-colonel, and Shams Badran, Minister of War, as "Al-Furqan Chief".

BOOKS ON ISLAM

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The expanding umma

Hugh Kennedy

FRED MCGRAW DONNER

The Early Islamic Conquests
480pp. Guildford: Princeton University Press, £25.50.
0 691 05327 8

There can be few major historical questions on which modern scholarship has shed so little light as the causes and nature of the Islamic conquests of the Middle East, and the most important discussions of the process available to the modern student, those of De Geoe and Caetani, date from before the First World War. This dismal state of affairs is partly the outcome of the specialization of modern academics; one is either a Byzantinist or an Iranianist or an Arabist and questions which straddle these disciplines, however important, tend to be neglected. The result of this is that issues which loom large in, say, the discussion of the Anglo-Saxon settlement of England, issues like patterns of settlement and the balance of change and continuity between the old and new orders, have been almost totally neglected. The general histories are usually content with a recitation of the dates of the main events and some general comments on the unifying effects of religious enthusiasm among the Arabs and the "exhaustion" of the Byzantine and Sassanian empires.

In these circumstances, a book entitled *The Early Islamic Conquests* arouses high expectations and the reader will not be disappointed. The title reflects the limited chronological period covered. Fred Donner deals with the campaigns of the Prophet, the *rida* wars and the conquests and initial settlement of Syria and Iraq. The conquests of Jazira and Egypt are only touched on, while later conquests in Iraq and the West are barely mentioned. Furthermore the author bases his account almost entirely on Arabic sources, only using Greek and Syriac chronicles to help with chronological difficulties where possible. On the other hand it is refreshing to see a historian fully conversant with the recent anthropological literature, especially where it concerns the process of state formation and the growth of ideas of authority among pastoral peoples.

Professor Donner begins with a discussion of pre-Islamic Arabia, laying stress on the variety of cultures and peoples to be found in the peninsula. He then goes on to discuss Muhammad's teaching and the nature of the early Islamic community or *umma*. The author is concerned with two questions, the extent to which the organization of the *umma* was based on the model of the tribe and the features of the organization which allowed it to expand so dynamically. The argument is closely reasoned and convincing; the *umma* provided protection in the same way as a tribe and demanded the same solidarity against threats from outside, but it claimed a degree of authority

over its members which no secular tribe could, by virtue of its invocation of divine sanction and support. Those who flouted the rules of the community not only deprived themselves of protection in this life but imperilled their immortal souls as well. At the same time the *umma* was not exclusive; even the most ambitious shaykh of the most far-flung tribe could only claim superiority over his own group and those they conquered, while Islam claimed the allegiance of all men regardless of kin or origin. Within the *umma*, Muhammad held a position of authority to which no tribal shaykh could aspire, since decisions were made not by the tribe according to customary law, but according to Allah's command as expressed through his Prophet. These factors meant that the *umma* provided the framework for the expansion of the Muslim state in a way which an ordinary tribe could never have done. It also meant that it was impossible to be a Muslim without accepting the authority of the *umma*, paying taxes to it and obeying the commands of its leaders.

The *umma* emerged among the tribesmen of the Hijaz and their allies from the surrounding tribes; Donner makes clear how important the urban background was, and he sees the first phase of the Islamic conquests as the conquest of the rest of Arabia by a small, tightly-knit élite of the Quraysh of Makkah, the Thaqif of Taif and, to a lesser extent, the people of Madina.

Submission to the new state meant abandonment, not just of the old religion, but also of the *badu* way of life. The campaigns in Iraq and Syria followed necessarily on those in Arabia and there was no dividing line between the two areas. If Arab tribes in Arabia were obliged to accept Islam, then clearly Arab tribes in Syria and Iraq had to as well. This inevitably brought the Islamic state into conflict with both Byzantines and Sassanians, anxious to protect their own frontiers and their client tribes.

Donner is especially interesting on the organization of the Muslim expeditions and his work should dispel some widely held illusions. There was nothing haphazard about the formation of Islamic armies. Those who wished to join up migrated first to Madina, a symbolic move away from tribal territory, where they were assigned to a particular campaign by the Caliph. The armies were comparatively small, certainly fewer in number than their opponents, but they were all fighting men, rather than nomads moving with their families and flocks. Leadership of the armies remained entirely in the hands of the Islamic élite, even when, as in Iraq, most of the troops came from other groups. The Islamic conquests, the author shows clearly, were not a migration of barbarian tribes driven by pressure of population or religious enthusiasm to invade neighbouring territories; they were organized

military expeditions led by an élite anxious to enforce and maintain its authority over Arab tribesmen. Conquest was followed by settlement in urban areas like Basra and Kufa; if the tribesmen were to become good Muslims, they had to become good townsmen as well.

Another subject on which Donner makes an important contribution is the question of the sources and the difficulty of determining the chronology of events. The Muslim sources are rich in detail, but the general outline often remains confused and the order of the main campaigns varies from one source to another. This discrepancy has usually been solved by accepting some accounts and dismissing others as unreliable but in this work it is argued that this confusion is a product of the two different stages in which the chronicles have come down to us were composed. The first was a preservation, often by oral tradition, of the exploits of individuals or tribes. These accounts are concerned to preserve the memory of heroic deeds, not to provide a general account. A century later, Muslim annalists attempted to arrange these traditions to form a narrative account of the campaigns, but they suffered from the same problems as we do today: "all of these chronological schemes", Donner argues, "are at heart later efforts to bring order to a mass of fragmentary accounts about the conquests in Syria,

and though one such scheme may appear to be more plausible than another, all are essentially guesswork". In fact we have to know the exact order of events, but this does not mean that the Muslim sources are unreliable; it simply means that the original narrators were not interested in the same things as late Muslim and other historians and it is wrong to dismiss them as untrustworthy because of the contradictions they contain.

In both the appreciation of the sources and the analysis of the historical events, Donner has made a major contribution to our understanding. The book discusses complex ideas and is meticulously documented, but its writing remains clear and direct and is wholly free from pointless jargon and unnecessary obscurities. Much of the evidence is contained in a series of appendices giving the names of the main combatants in each campaign, recorded in the sources, and there is a full bibliography. There can be no doubt that the whole question of the Islamic conquests and settlement needs to be re-examined, from the point of view of conquerors and conquered alike, and that the process will prove to be as complex and fascinating as the German penetration of the Western Roman Empire. Fred Donner's book provides a brilliant beginning for such a debate.

Europe's forgotten quarter

C. J. Heywood

BRUCE MCGOWAN

Economic Life in Ottoman Europe: Taxation, Trade and the Struggle for Land, 1600-1800
226pp. Cambridge University Press, £20.
0 521 24208 8

It is a truism still in some circles grudgingly acknowledged or at worst conveniently overlooked, that in the first age of European expansion overseas (so the reigns of Charles V and Philip II) the only serious rival and equal of the Habsburgs as a global multinational among the dynasties of the time was the Ottoman sultanate. In part this has been due to an understandable preference among historians for the familiar and the accessible: in preference to the unfamiliar and the receding; after all, the archives of Venice and Sinanca of Istanbul have been open for longer than those of the Ottoman state. It would be generally agreed that even the most expertly written Spanish document from the reign of Philip II is a good deal easier to read and interpret than the Ottoman counterpart from one of the chanceries of Murad III. Nor was there much prospect for the integration of Ottoman historical scholarship into the body of European and Mediterranean history until the former had emancipated itself from the fruitless shackles of its spiritual origins in nineteenth-century Central European classical philology.

That this process is now well underway is due largely to the interaction of two disparate sets of intellectual stimuli: firstly, the exploitation, from the 1930s onwards, and until recently mainly by Turkish economic historians of whom the late Ömer Lütfi Barkan (d. 1979) was the pioneer, of the fiscal and cadastral records of the Ottoman state. This has permitted – the more so after 1950 or thereabouts – the shedding of a powerful if flimsy light on the social, economic and demographic history of the lands between Hungary and the Yemen in the period of the Ottoman ascendancy. Externally the stimulus was supplied by the Braudelian view of Mediterranean history, which alluded to but failed to deal adequately with the Ottoman "quadrant" just at the moment when the opening of the Turkish archives made it possible to believe – perhaps over-optimistically – that what historians had done for the Spain of Philip II could be undertaken for the Ottoman Empire of Selim I and his immediate successors.

Despite (or perhaps because of) the above factors, Ottoman economic history remains a difficult, even a daunting, field. The necessary linguistic skills in modern and Ottoman Turkish (and also in the fossilized, Stratford-ate-Bow kind of Persian which the bureaucrats of the financial departments of the Ottoman bureaucracy habitually employed for record-keeping purposes until the early nineteenth century) are hard to come by, while to work with the Ottoman financial-cadastral documents themselves is to accept the apprenticeship of a lifetime, where one and the same ligature may be read as "item", entered or "item", depending on context and scholar. Access to the relevant archives for foreign scholars, while often liberal and generous when contrasted with eg. current Russian practice, is usually tardy, occasionally capricious and sometimes at the mercy of domestic or foreign political considerations, while well-intentioned schemes for the large-scale microfilming of the more important classes of documents have failed to gain any wide acceptance. Perversely, what has been published – and the literature is now enormous – makes matters worse. In that the Empire included not only Greece and Bulgaria, but Albania and Hungary; not only Romania (as containing perpetual or ephemeral fragments of Ottoman territory); Poland, Russia, and Czechoslovakia; not only Turkey itself but Syria, Jordan, Egypt, the lands of the eastern Maghrib, and, at one remove, Israel; in the archives of many of which and in the national languages of all of which there are smaller or larger collections of documents of recent and important contributions to the historiography of the subject.

It is, of course, an article of faith among the adherents of the Walsstein school of global economic historians that there was a causal relationship between the rise of western capitalism and the development of export-oriented agriculture in "the emerging peripheral world with which Europe traded", leading to "modes of coerced labour" typical of fully developed economic and political colonialism. This explanation for the emergence of the so-called *chiflik* agriculture in the central provinces of Rumeli seems hardly tenable – as McGowan suggests – for a region in which a thoroughly coercive labour service flourished under the indigenous Serb and Bulgar predecessors of the Ottomans, as was recognized of a century ago by a historian of the calibre of Jireček. Rather does it seem likely that, as among all the inheritors of the mantle of Rome and Byzantium, coercion was designed much more to serve the needs of the state and to resolve an endemic labour shortage; Russia was not become a significantly less labour-coercive society since it changed from being a net exporter to a net importer of grain. Nor was the coercive mode limited to Byzantium and its successors: it was also an integral part of the Perso-Islamic traditions of statecraft embodied in the *pax ottomana* and imposed on South-Eastern Europe from the mid-fourteenth century onwards.

Here McGowan presses too hard when he says that it is difficult to show persuasively and causal connection between the Ottoman quadrilateral and the serfdom variant in the north. [sic] despite their

underdeveloped field are duty-bound to provide more basic statistical information, both for themselves and for other scholars.

The theme which links these five essays is the apparent transformation of the "classical" *chiflik* (both distinguishing inverted commas) pattern of landholding in the Ottoman Empire in the sixteenth century – a centrally administered military colonate dominating a subservient peasantry – into a possibly more export-market-oriented economy of large (and largely heritable) estates – the so-called *chiflik* system – by the early decades of the nineteenth century. To this end his earlier essays draw mainly on the work of other historians in the field; the later ones are based in large part on the surviving Ottoman archival collections in Yugoslavia and Turkey.

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Here McGowan presses too hard when he says that it is difficult to show persuasively and causal connection between the Ottoman quadrilateral and the serfdom variant in the north. [sic] despite their

coincidence in time and proximity, it is in fact no need to demonstrate causal connection between the status of the Slav and Ottoman peasants; the two systems were not similar because of osmosis or conscious borrowing, but in their nature, with any putative ultimate common causation pushed back at least as far as the general crisis of the ancient world between western Europe and the Indian and north China in the sixth and seventh centuries AD, and the consequent survival of ancient state forms from Byzantium to China to hypercentralized politics, the residual legacies of which are still with us.

It is perhaps pertinent (if heretofore to enquire how much worse off the Ottoman economy might have been had it not possessed an outlet for its products surplus to the domestic market and the needs of a large army: the needs – or demands – of a mercantile court, and the feeding of the urban poor of Istanbul). And yet one suspects that, for the period prior to c. 1700 at least, for every labour-coerced Ottoman peasant engaged in producing a commodity surplus, grain, valonia, mohair or whatever, for export in English Levant Company or other foreign bottoms there were a hundred engaged in the production of agricultural or livestock surplus for local provisioning of the army or the navy, in the supply of horses for the courier network, in the production of charcoal, copper or silver for the state.

This, in fact, seems to be the conclusion which McGowan himself comes to; even in the region of land to take an illustration from, the Anatolian half of the empire, that is, the region which had in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the strongest maritime trading links with western Europe of any part of the Ottoman dominions, it appears that the fiscal dominance of the peasantry did not in the organization of estates to serve the ends of the export trade, which constituted the primary rural source of power and fortune. That it was the Ottoman society which attitudes of determined economic fortunes, and not the global metaphysics of the world economy will be perhaps the most fruitful of McGowan's revisionist views, in that it should (but probably will not) liberate more historians to the actual languages and archives rather than more a priori system-building in an attempt to understand further the history of Europe's forgotten quarter.

FICTION

High-school subversions

Jim Crace

PRAMOEDYA ANANTA TORR

This Earth of Mankind
Translated and Introduced by Max Lane
338pp. Penguin, £2.50.
0 14 00 6334 X

This Earth of Mankind, Pramodya Ananta Torr's allegory of Indonesian national awakening, strikes an artlessly passionate and bitterly pessimistic note, it is with good cause. "Stories about happy things are never interesting," he writes. "They are not stories about people and their lives, but about heaven."

The novel is the first in a cycle of four, produced during the fourteen years of this peripatetic Javanese novelist's detention without trial on the prison island of Buru in the Moluccas. He was arrested in 1963 following the abortive "Red November" *putsch*, not because he was a revolutionary activist but because of an association with Lekra, the left-wing writers' group.

Deprived of writing implements, Pramodya invented an oral novel which he retold from memory, in daily episodes, to fellow detainees. It was hardly Socialist Realism in the Lekra mode. It matched in manner and content the Panji cycle of stories from medieval East Java – a tale of grand passion, thwarted by set-back and rebuff, the lovers finally and cruelly separated (for ever?) after their wedding night. Pramodya set *This Earth of Mankind* in the colonial port of Surabaya in 1898. His ingenious hero, Minke, is a rarity – an Indonesian at the Dutch Senior High School, "a Native who has smuggled himself in

through the cracks of European civilization." Annelies Mellema, the "fragile doll" (and symbol of an innocent, vulnerable Indonesia), with whom he becomes obsessed, is the "Indo" daughter of a Dutchman and his native concubine. The enemies of their love – and the objects of Pramodya's discreet polemic – are caste, social convention and heartless, unprincipled bureaucracy.

This Earth of Mankind was published in Indonesia soon after Pramodya's release from Buru in 1979 and the uneasy translation of the tale from memory to paper had been made. The novel was slow to spot the subversive resonance of the book's tragic-romantic plot. It escaped suppression until 1981. Then, for good measure, the Indonesian government imprisoned its publisher, Joesoef Iskak, and expelled Max Lane, the Australian diplomat and translator, for rendering it into English. Lane – whose translation is woefully inelegant – in his introduction to this Penguin edition, reveals little of the physical and mental circumstances of the novel's creation. This is a pity, because the oddities and blemishes as well as the emotional eloquence of this courageous work are best comprehended in the light of Pramodya's Buru experience.

This Earth of Mankind is a "customized" novel. Its high-school setting and its curious mélange of romance, sexual encounter, literary and artistic allusion and submerged political invective (to the neglect of a coherent overall scheme) have been tailored to suit exactly the experience and preoccupations of its first audience, the incarcerated, culturally and sexually deprived High School graduates of "Camp Intellectual". But the requirements of its invention as an oral tale – a direct and episodic plot, a

how the golden sheep came to be fashioned, and Jansin thought of the curious ways in which chance worked."

The novel concerns the search for El Dorado; it begins by describing a line painted on the Equator and subsequently explores the Amazonian jungle and modern South American civilization. The main characters are blessed with great material wealth, but find it necessary to escape from the spiritually richer past. Jorga Rojas, a ranch-owner, is attached to his "eight thousand hectares of land enjoying the best view from the southeast corner that showed at a distance of some thirty kilometers, one of the peaks of the Andes which was always capped with snow." When he leaves this behind in order to indulge his sexual passion for a young woman, he thereby subjects his family to a curse that threatens the stability of the whole area.

At first, both Rafael and Violeta think they have discovered Paradise – for each is befriended by a powerful and possessive family. Rafael responds to his benefactor Oyarzun by giving him the golden car he has borrowed from Kessel. It undergoes a metamorphosis at the hands of a sculptor: "The Lincoln had been crushed till it was less than three meters long and a little under two meters in

small number of broadly drawn characters, a vigorous narrative manner with regular surprises and suspense – precluded subtleties of expression and structure. Much of the work appears clumsy and homespun on the printed page. Dialogue is declaratory: "Ah, Mother, how many pearl-like words have you soldered into my being." Characters and relationships important to the novel's allegorical scheme remain vague: "The attorney I met turned out to be middle aged... His name was Mr. ... I'll not mention his name here. He was a famous jurist and a very wealthy man as a result of his practice as a brilliant attorney and advocate and his name was often mentioned in connection with many big cases." The conversational idiom is appealing, but the description is inefficient, repetitive, and rudimentary.

Most impressive and plausible in *This Earth of Mankind* are those set-piece episodes where Pramodya allows his characters to reminisce. The artist Jean Marais recalls his short-lived military career with Dutch colonial forces, the loss of his wife to Acehese swordsmen, the loss of his leg to gangrene. Maliko, the Japanese prostitute, tells of her slow professional downfall as a victim of "burnese" syphilis. Annelies's mother, Nymí Ontosoroh, recounts the events of her slavery and concubinage. Like the Indonesian nation itself, she is handed over on a plate to the Dutch invaders by cowardly and compliant parents. Each tale is a sustained masterpiece of political metaphor, sparing no reputations, whether colonial or native, in "this jungle of ignorance which is the Indies." *This Earth of Mankind* is a flawed novel of only intermittent literary attractions, but it remains a work to be respected and celebrated.

opportunist posing as a political and archaeological idealist. In return for a sixteenth-century map showing the way to El Dorado, Kessel has agreed to aid the cause of revolution in South America and he does so as ostentatiously as possible. He drives a golden Lincoln stuffed with gold bars, upholstered in continental velvet, and his melodramatic entrance into the narrative steps up the symbolism. In his "golden beast" of a car he loses the way in a "dark and seemingly endless" forest; because of his total intervention Rafael and Violeta are separated and are only allowed to get back together in a disturbing incestuous climax.

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Striking the rock

Mark Abley

DON BANNISTER

Burning Leaves
278pp. Routledge and Kegan Paul, £6.95.
0 7100 9209 1

Madness is familiar in fiction. In charting the progressive disarray of Paul Killick, a young and brilliant history lecturer of a northern university, Don Bannister does little that other novelists have not done before. But after Paul's failure at suicide, and especially after his departure from a mental hospital to become a homeless drifter, *Burning Leaves* takes on a fresh, disturbing energy. For Bannister knows that renewal can be as mysterious a process as decline, and his hero has much to endure before a frail stability sets in. The novel bears an epigraph from Luis MacNeice's "Hidden lee", a poem many of whose phrases resound through Paul's adventures; he has lost his "mild bravado in the face of time", and his "inconceivable stamina" has deserted him. He has struck with all his force "the rock beneath the calm upholstery". To describe the shattering impact may not be all that difficult; but Bannister goes on to explore the aftermath.

Each of his fifty-two chapters starts with the name "Paul", a trick that heightens the cinematic, "Scenes From A Life" quality of the narrative. All the other characters matter only in so far as they impinge on Paul. The danger is that on his ragged travels through the midlands and the north he will encounter merely an assortment of cyphers. The episode in which he meets his brutal, impatient father

Recovery comes through a chance encounter with an old woman, Bella Watson, the keeper of a boarding house in a humdrum Yorkshire town. Nursed back to health by Bella, Paul soon acquires a bedmate, a job, and the gradual knowledge that society need not be a threat. Having passed most of the novel in total self-absorption (before his entry to hospital, only a much maligned garden gnome could divert any of his sympathy from himself), he begins to find small ways of helping others. Our attention has been concentrated so fully on Paul's preoccupations that it comes as a shock to find, a few chapters from the end, a long letter from his wife describing her own grief and suffering. At this point Bannister is particularly careful not to provide even the smallest hints or directions to the reader. We are free to blame Paul for her despair, but we are not enjoined to do so.

Paul's heroes in English history include John Bull, Jarrowish Brandreth and the seventeenth-century radicals; as a don he had intended to write the definitive history of the Levellers. It may not be fanciful to think that by the end of the novel Paul has, at least in his creator's mind, attained something similar to the state of simple plainness or innocence for which Winstanley yearned. But this equilibrium has been bought at a terrible cost, and not only to himself. Such is the burden of *Burning Leaves*, written with care and roughness. A smoother, more elegant tale of the "hidden lee" would surely be less disquieting.

As the book unfolds, old legends and ancient myths begin to reassert themselves in the modern world of fairs and canned music. The latter, Ochose's vision implies, is suffering from a lack of magic and enchantment, and it is a vision that makes *A New History of Torment* an exceptional novel.

In the tracks of the golden beast

Alan Bold

ZULFIKAR GHOSE

A New History of Torment
302pp. Hutchinson, £7.95.
0 09 147670 4

Zulfiakar Ghose's new novel comes complete with clues to the cultural level of its contents: the title is derived from a poem by Neruda, and quotations by T. S. Eliot and César Vallejo introduce the two parts of the book. Plot, in such circumstances, is secondary to artistic performance, and character is a pretext for a text full of allegorical significance. Ghose intends to take the reader on an odyssey through the mythical realms of gold, and makes his intentions clear through literary allusion: "Keats, on first looking into Chapman's Homer, could not have felt more wonder than Jason did when he stood in the courtyard on the island and found himself staring at the golden sheep..." Rafael told him

March, Happy Valley

Days that are finely stretched and luminous on the paper of a Chinese lantern, keep the birds up late and whisper across the valley where a massive wind felts sleep. All down the hoath-side, dangerously close as heart-beats to a foot that trends deep grass, hang violas in the strangeness of their blue. Luggages, personally new, with ancient heads that they can only bend, they have arrived more quietly than the dew to feel the perfect cold of where they stand. The country has a used, dishonest face. A look of four back-streets where trade has died though half the windows still pretend with lace. Spring, the sweet spring, is a refugee child grown old before his time, a hope displaced.

Carol Rumens

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Another part of town

J. K. L. Walker

ROBERT MULLER
Virginites
248pp. Hutchinson. £7.95.
0 09 147710 7

Growing up in London has always been a chancy business. The heat of life in the capital quickly expands physical and emotional energies which are not easily released without danger to passers-by. In 1943 and 1944, the years covered by *Virginites*, German bombs and V-5s offered further stimulus, and are among the factors that help to animate the unnamed adolescent hero of Robert Muller's novel.

The "secret diaries" of which *Virginites* is composed reveal a scuttling time-bomb of frustrated sexual desire and grandiose literary ambitions (he serves as deputy film critic in Ernest Berts on the *Daily Express*) who has exchanged a promising role as Crouch End Grammar's brightest pupil for that of editorial office-boy with Featurix, a news and picture agency near Soken Square. Home is Sunnyside Road, N8 (nearest Tube shelter: Archway), where the narrator gloomily endures the mumbled confidences of Dnd, who works in Simpsons' bespoke tailoring department, and displays a healthy appetite for Mum's Woolton-inspired squirrel pie.

Sunnyside Road can be no more

than a short bicycle ride from The Laurels, Holloway, residence of the most notable of London fictional diarists. Like the Grossmiths, Muller plunges his hero into the elbow in the riches of London lower-middle-class life and comes up with a novelist's ransom of character and incident, throwing off an eerie gleam of dreamy striving, dashed hopes and compulsive deceits. But here the view is Lupin's, not Charles's. Chippy London knowings, though, thanks to Hollywood and Crouch End Grammar, has taken on a more recognizably modern look. The narrator's mind is a yeast mix of half-baked tastes and ideas which Muller, opening the oven door halfway through the conking, reveals with hilarious accuracy. The ingredients include novels: Mann, Waughham, Donaghy, Sidney Horler. A *Handful of Dust* — "One of Miss Waugh's better efforts"; modern plays, "(favourite: Keith Winter's *The Rats of Norway*"); music, with "Chattanooga Choo-Choo" breathing the tape ahead of Beethoven's Fifth; and above all films.

After lunch to Tivoli for Fritz Lang's *Hongkonger Also Die* (Cyril's film idol, Brecht, has allegedly written script). Queues stretch round block, so make do with *Casablanca* at Regal, Marble Arch. Pure corn, saved by Conrad Veldt and Peter Lorre.

Short, bespectacled, shamefully advised by Mum over Chinese lunch in Wardmur Street "to wash down there".

the diarist fills his pages with a candid recital of his disastrous sex life. Singled out, he inches towards his objective of shedding his virginity before he is called up, buzzing between whichever secretary or nurse or cinema usherette he has temporarily fantasized into inevitable compliance. Unsurprisingly, the petals close up as the girl's sulkily agree to yet another film-buff's treat at the Vogue, Tatting, followed by the park. Confronted by more willing partners, such as the spotty but plump Ruth, lately attached to his best friend Cyril (now metamorphosing from Left Book Club stalwart to hero of Biggin Hill) at the mock-genteel grass-widowed Mrs Rafferty, the narrator predictably makes a run for it, laying down a smokescreen of principle to cover his flight. Such rationalizations, though, quickly vanish beneath his own comic self-scrutiny and that of his friend Ferenc, a Central European refugee (long since, at the age of fourteen, put out of his misery by the family chambermaid), who plunges the narrator's head into icy Freudian water.

Muller's account of the stringencies of lower-middle-class adolescence forty years ago is both true and funny: the tone of the diaries exactly reproduces the plaintive dissonance of quick-witted facetiousness and melancholy characteristic of many young Londoners of the period. This wartime sound was made up of many clashing phrases: Left Book Club pieties, stylized metropolitan cynicism,

the romantic fantasies of Hollywood, the daily dangers from flying bombs and the inexorable approach of military service (although it is worth noting that at this stage of the war, direction into the mines was regarded as the worse fate; it was unheroic and, worse, cast the conscript back into the working class from which the family might only recently have escaped.)

But *Virginites* is as much a lovingly assembled scrapbook of this particular stratum of wartime London as it is a comedy of growing up. Guy Crouchback and X. Tropnel are in another part of town; even Hooper would have shone at the Featurix office parties. Muller rightly stresses the importance of orchestral concerts to Londoners during these years, with Basil Cameron and Shulamith Sinafr

and Sidney Beer thundering like Beethoven's Seventh and Liszt's Concerto Symphonique; while television cinema, with its magnified pantheon of stars from its worshipped needs be at such distance as the Majestic, Mitcham, with its chance of an air-raid to call them out. Heady times, which Muller recapitulates with affection and scrupulous attention to detail (although it was "coughs and sneezes, not 'colds and sneezes', that spread diseases). London bus-waiters will note with interest in the novel the sighting of a Number 19, a species which, though still officially listed, is thought to be extinct.

Planetary designs

Colin Greenland

IAN WATSON
Sunstroke and Other Stories
190pp. Gollancz. £7.95.
0 573 03138 7

Albert Einstein declared that God does not play dice with the cosmos. Ian Watson suggests that He may nevertheless play anooker with it, a game in which the factor of chance is concatenated from the first shot, rather than isolated in discrete throws. Alternatively, God may supervise the universe like a film editor, cutting out the unnecessary bits. Or he may dwell in the "multiverse", the chaotic set of all possible universes, waiting for the single moment of creation when life will bind time, forward and back, into "fierce deterministic causality".

The occupation of God is of interest to many science-fiction writers. Some acquire a sort of fellow-feeling for the Creator from their mutual desire for the business of planetary design. Other more abstract intelligences, such as Watson's, often have to account for the deity because they use science fiction as a species of philosophical inquiry. Their perpetual redefinition of known and assumed conditions entails frequent glimpses of what the absolute might be. Watson even has the temerity to dictate, in the first person singular, "A Letter from God" — the snooker story — which, while allowing Opponent too, still manages to leave a vast gap between God and terrestrial life — the only life in this particular universe and something of a fluke shot in the game.

Similarly, in "The Milk of Knowledge", the multiverse story, human consciousness is the only thing that gives the cosmos form, the form of causality, and therefore meaning. Watson likes to single out humanity in his speculations. In "Peace" human colonialism triggers the first extraterrestrial war by demanding a treaty; humanity is the only species that needs to remind itself that all beings are planets with life-forms that do not reproduce sexually. These distinctions express Watson's conviction that unknown reality is more likely to contradict the known than reproduce it. It might be argued that this is the only viable belief for a science-fiction writer if his stars are not to become suburbs, but contradiction, opinion in conflict, is Watson's forte and his principal mode of narration.

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By process of elimination

Robert M. Adams

NORBERT ELIAS
State Formation and Civilization
376pp. Oxford: Blackwell. £19.50.
0 631 19680 3

Norbert Elias's account of "The Civilizing Process" proceeds on its majestic way. This reviewer noticed in the TLS of September 15, 1978 a first volume, *The History of Manners: the second volume, titled State Formation and Civilization*, is before us now; we seem to be promised three more. "The Court Society", "Involvement and Detachment", and (with Eric Dunning) "Quest for Excitement".

Readers of the first volume will not find a great deal changed in the circumstances of the second. It too was originally published at Basel in 1939, and has been translated into English; it too carefully avoids any allusion to work less than forty-five years old. It too undertakes to combine history, sociology, and psychology in a synoptic vision of the long process by which modern man achieved, better or worse, his present state of "civilization". An unwelcome and remarkable change is that the first volume was priced at £8.50; for the second, the price-tag is £19.50. If we advance at this rate through the next three volumes, "Quest for Excitement" will be beyond the reach of anyone but a syndicate.

In line with positions previously assumed, Elias does not in this volume put much stock in ideas, ideologies, or conscious programmes of reform or signs of civilization. Rather, he sees

civilization developing out of social conflicts and complications — lengthening chains of processing and distribution — which require greater foresight and more strict controls, until, without anyone foreseeing or very much wanting it, civilization gradually replaces a condition of disorder and local violence. Rather more frequently in this volume than in the previous one, he speaks of the social change as the operation of a mechanism. Indeed, the first and larger part of the present volume is entirely devoted to explaining the mechanism by which a loosely integrated feudal society (his primary example is France) gave way to a centralized, absolutist, court-centred society. For its first 225 pages the book pursues this topic in relative isolation from the theme of changing manners; the last hundred or so pages describe the replacement of the "free knight" ethos — frank, violent, predatory — with that of the supple, polished, impenetrable courtier. By and large, Elias sees as the motive agent of this change a process of attrition. Competing knights, competing families, competing districts and coalitions of interest gradually eliminate one another till a single successful survivor becomes absolute monarch. Within his court, and in response to the directives of his double monopoly (of force and finances, the army and taxation), a code of "civilized" manners develops.

The first part of this argument will not strike anyone as a crashing novelty. Elimination contests were, and still are, natural preliminaries to the establishment of a supreme authority figure, whether among feudal chieftains, warring vice-presidents of a corporation, or the kids of a street-gang. Here the point is laboured,

with numerous repetitions, through the convolutions of an extraordinarily cumbersome dialect; a reader's patience will be put to the test. On the other hand, the fractious reader may, in the intervals of his impatience, wonder about some other anomalies of the civilizing process. Why is it, he could ask, that sixteenth-century Italy, where no autocratic monopoly of power ever developed — where, on the contrary, the fragmented city-states and the *condottieri* sustaining them were never even threatened with any sort of centralization — why did this society become the master of civilized manners and courtly behaviour to all Europe? No doubt there is an answer to this question, perhaps several answers; but as Elias never admits either to his book, the reader must contemplate both query and response on his own.

Again, one cannot quarrel with the basic notion that the civilizing process was a consequence of "sociogenetic" forces, widespread and almost intangible — forces imperfectly understood by and not necessarily agreeable to the men and women on whom they bore. One can explain in the same way religious toleration, two-party politics, and a great many other contemporary practices — they arose from changes in the pattern of social behaviour. But that programmatic idealism had nothing whatever to do with the civilizing process seems an extreme position. A crucial instance might be found in slavery and the attitude towards it of the Christian churches. From St. Vulstan in the eleventh century to William Wilberforce and the American abolitionist movement in the nineteenth, it is impossible to review the history of slavery in the West without recognizing the part played in

its abolition by the Christian churches. No doubt their efforts were rendered more or less effective by social forces outside their control and partly outside their ken; changing modes of organizing labour, different market conditions, altered tensions between classes intent on pursuing their own interests — all played a part. But that the leadership of the churches across the centuries can be wholly disregarded is preposterous. And that there must be some change in the manners of civilized people when their fellow-citizens are no longer treated unquestioningly as chattels must also appear likely.

A traditional view lays great stress, in the development of civilized manners, on the change in the status of women implicit in the mode of courtly love. Elias will have none of this; indeed, he suggests that the codes of civility were known only to a few exceptional men, and constituted for them mostly remote ideals to which they paid little more than lip-service. Knights and even kings sometimes assaulted their wives; they dismissed them with contempt when "serious" matters came up for discussion. Perhaps so; there are some passages in the life of Sir Thomas Malory (if indeed the author of the *Morte d'Arthur* was the man he seems to have been) which suggest that he was very far from the impeccable chevalier he held up as a role model in his book. On the other hand, rough manners and contempt for women hardly belong in the world of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, a poem written far from any court, and in a dialect unknown to most courtiers. The *lais* of Marie de France and the *Parzival* of Wolfram von Eschenbach present the same ideals, and by no means in a way that suggests nobody was expected to follow them. In Book III of the latter poem, one notes particularly the earnest advice given the hero by Gurnemanzle Grahaz: it begins by explicitly inculcating a sense of shame and ends with praise of "modest consideration" within a framework of marriage-love. Both elements occur in the *lais* of the twelfth century too early, according to the time-scale implied by Elias's "mechanism".

Still, over the long centuries, and after innumerable vicissitudes more for the influence of local conditions, temporary fluctuations, and wavering human intentions, Elias is surely right that the code of modern manners derives major sustenance from increasing division of labour, lengthening chains of social and economic interdependence, and the consequent requirement that individuals exercise more foresight, more circumspection, and more restraint over their appetites. Many of these considerations, to be sure, seem likely to bear more directly on members of the commercial and industrial classes than on kings and courtiers; another aspect of the civilizing process that Elias does not mention is the long search for substitute activities to keep the turbulent gentry from their favourite activity, fighting. Crusades, pilgrimages, hunting, tournaments, games, masques, ceremonies, and of course travel all offer, in different forms and to different degrees, moral equivalents to war; so, one supposes, do the mimic campaigns of business enterprise and commercial accumulation. Elias makes much of the due de Salm-Salm as a prototype of the devoted courtier, who can doubt that if we knew as much of the inner thoughts of Sir George Downing or John Baron Somerset, plebeian as their origins were, we should find them equally canny, equally calculating? To the history of civilized manners, it's a long step forward when men turn from open mayhem to covert guile and sly deceit. But of course this is still "civilization" only by courtesy, and with a great many reservations. Urbane hypocrites who hide their predatory appetites behind the forms of good manners are the mere apes of civilization, whom we are bound to distinguish, if we can, from people whose sense of courtesy is disinterested and uncalculating. The long historical scale to which "The Civilizing Process" is constructed does not very often encourage its author to probe intimate complexities — for

militancy and quietism in the early Quakers, or the foreshadowings of cultural relativism to be sensed even in such a primitive fabrication as *The Travels of Sir John Mandeville*. Awareness of the individual conscience in its elected dignity and of many moral codes other than one's own — these can hardly have failed to enter the mix of restraint and awareness, of complacency and deference, that we call, all too loosely, civilization.

To what extent does the change documented by Elias correspond with or lead into that defined by David Riesman as the move from outer-directed to inner-directed personalities? The correspondence seems so palpable, one would like to see it defined, limited perhaps — at any rate acknowledged. From there one might pass to the two opposed definitions of religion, as a guide to be followed or a rule to be interpreted, and the personality-types corresponding to each. But that would be another book; the metaphor of the mechanism seems to have discouraged Elias from any such diversionary excursions. He appears to view history as a single process proceeding inexorably in a single direction. Smaller units of local force invariably eliminate one another and are absorbed into larger districts, then into unified and coercive nations; nations are absorbed into wider and more compelling alliances, till ultimately the whole world will be dominated by a single power-monopoly enforcing a single code of values and manners — to the extinction, evidently, of all variety and freedom. Presumably at that point history will come to a stop, or wind off on another, quite unpredictable, gyre.

That discouraging prospect, however, is found not mainly and most categorically on two pages (330 and 331) of *State Formation and Civilization*; elsewhere it appears that the mechanism is not utterly inexorable in its operation — that, in fact, monopolies occasionally disintegrate as well as coalesce. Such might be our commonsense opinion after reviewing the record of a few historical empires — from China, let's say, to Peru. It's a rather liberating possibility, raising questions about the total predictability of a mechanism which, for reasons not distinctly contemplated by the historian, can run, now forwards, now backwards. Perhaps history contains more free variables than ruthless eliminatory competition. Perhaps, if that is the case, it leads to baffling conclusions than an ever-widening, ever more oppressive monopoly of physical and moral power — power to which, rather than "civilization", one is tempted to attach the very different name of "Kultur". But that's another word which is hardly spoken, another concept dismissed as another set of complex problems barely adumbrated by this vast yet somehow blinkered study.

The book remains, as I implied in connection with the first volume, ambitious and thought-provoking; it also remains, partly as a result of its method, more as a result of its prose, very heavy going indeed. A sentence from page 311 is more strained syntactically than the average, but not untypical in the amount of shrinkage required to get it down to size:

The strength of the social constraints, and the many contradictions within it, to which the behaviour of each individual member of the upper class, the establishment, is subject and which are represented by his own "super-ego", are not determined solely by the fact that it is a control exerted by competitors, some of them even in free competition, but above all by the fact that the competing members of the established groups at the same time have to make common cause to preserve their distinguishing prestige and their higher status from those pressing from below — still more or less as outsiders.

In a later volume, we are told, "The Quest for Excitement" will be discussed; if the quest leads through many blemishes of this order, there will be a strong temptation to settle for excitement of a less comforted and less characterful kind.

Intruding on the UWCs

Linda Taylor

RAY SALISBURY
Close the Door Behind You
234pp. André Deutsch. £7.95.
0 235 97469 5

It might have been better if Grandad had died. The trouble is that no one seems to realize that he's going to have a heart attack. You couldn't expect the naive narrator, Simon, to understand (he is, or was, only four), but what do Nan and Mum and Dad think they're up to? Ignoring the symptoms of doubled-up pains in the tummy (a euphemism for the chest) and persistently telling poor Grandad that

he's got a chill or indigestion?

Their blindness, though, is symptomatic of their condition: upper working classism. The UWCs are a funny breed. They live in the suburbs or in the corners of little market towns, they work hard at boring clerical jobs, they are house-proud (can be roused to fury by marks on the wallpaper and so on), snobbish (especially about "nasty" people, or LWCs), like things to be neat and tidy (hence the title of Ray Salisbury's first novel) and want their children to "get on" — the sights are set on something vaguely professional, via a college education. The men are impotent and the women cross their legs.

Ray Salisbury's particular set of

UWCs inhabit, in the 1940s, one of those villages just outside a town (Chichester) with mushrooming council estates. Simon has begun to learn the rules: there are a lot of them. His youth gives him the advantage, as narrator, of observing like an intruder the life of his family without bearing the responsibility for its code of practice. He can't even be disillusioned — that, we hope, will come later. There's a problem here, though, of credibility. Though the perspective is a four-year-old's, the first-person narrator is in the past tense, as if Simon is now a grown-up. But the prose is still babyish, full of simplistic images and words like "p-raps"; the dichotomy between authorial knowledge and childish vocabulary jars.

Salisbury does, though, have a facility for setting the child's sentiments exactly right: "I knew what she'd said", thinks Simon when his mother has warned him against going off with the workmen, "but I didn't know what she meant." Salisbury's other forte is the horrible accuracy of his UWCs' banal conversation. He can't, however, be forgiven for peppering Simon's family's speech with every clichéd UWC expletive under the sun. Perhaps they do say "cor lumme" and "blimey bill" and "good blimey" and "stone me" and "strew" and "bugger" and "blessed" all the time near Chichester, though they didn't where I came from.

Simon, meanwhile, is so busy learning the rules (on colouring in, for example, "You can't give him red buttons if you've already started to colour his coat red") that he doesn't have much time for the internal world of childish passion. Grandad does his best to provide this by taking Simon off to the woods where they suck Fox's glacier mints, and by introducing him to books — though Simon's list of favourites is a little suspect. Did he really understand *David Copperfield*, *Robinson Crusoe* and *The Christmas Carol*? UWC precocity, perhaps.

Another problem is that Ray Salisbury enjoyed his upbringing far too much (he grew up and lives in Sussex). The tone is nostalgic rather than implicitly condemnatory, and he's writing a sequel in which he sends the family clear the table, lay into the family and the future. One can only wish he was washing up and the table, lay into the family and the future. One can only wish he was washing up and the table, lay into the family and the future. One can only wish he was washing up and the table, lay into the family and the future.

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The rush to law

Malcolm Vale

JAN ROGOWSKI
Power, Caste, and Law: Social Conflict in Fourteenth-Century Montpellier.
200pp. Cambridge, Mass: Medieval Academy of America. \$22.
0 91095 72 3

The study of French regional history is not always the best place in which to find arresting conclusions about broader historical issues. Jan Rogowski's new book provides an exception. "Historians", he writes, "have traditionally portrayed social unrest in the later Middle Ages as the natural consequence of upper-class exploitation during years of economic decline". His study of fourteenth-century Montpellier demonstrates that conflict between the governing group (consuls) and the representatives of the "people" (populares) cannot be interpreted in terms of class-struggle or of exploitation of the dis-

franchised and oppressed. Social unrest was, he maintains, expressed in factional strife within the urban elite whose members used both litigation and violence to achieve their ends. Most of these clashes stemmed from attempts to levy royal and municipal taxation, for Montpellier appears to have lacked the acute social and economic tensions between guilds, crafts, trades and patricians which were a hallmark of urban society in Italy and the Low Countries.

Montpellier was no Florence nor Ghent: it could not be described as a large industrial town with an oppressed proletariat. Its social texture was not unlike that of other towns in Southern France, and the exaggerated legalism of its internal quarrels was in part a reflection of the general penetration of Roman law — the *droit écrit* — into this area. Rogowski leads us through a world of consuls and syndics, of logjams, consils, and responses, of notarial attestations, and private arbitrations with considerable skill, although his prose occasionally assumes some of the less desirable qualities of the documents upon which he largely relies for his evidence. This is perhaps

great deal of material into his text, leaving much important discussion which should have appeared there to some voluminous footnotes. It is unfortunate that his book should have suffered from these publishing constraints.

The most original of his many conclusions are perhaps two-fold: first, that the influence of Roman law upon legal practice in the Languedoc did not (as has often been argued) lead to an enhancement of royal power; second, that private arbitration was clearly of paramount importance in the settlement of disputes to Southern France. The French crown certainly possessed no monopoly over the process of conciliation in this area, and the habit of appointing both public and private arbitrators was perhaps the most common method of satisfactorily resolving conflicts among nobles, clergy and bourgeois at this time. Rogowski does not view medieval legal procedures in isolation, and writes that "arbitration of social conflict... usually by comparison to contemporary systems of collective bargaining between management and labor that function within a procedural framework set up by statutory law yet depend on the assent of the parties concerned." The parallels are not too closely drawn, but comparison with labour relations can illuminate what might otherwise appear to be a rather obscure and arcane subject.

An arbitration and conciliation have a long and complex history, and it is useful to be reminded of the forms which they assumed at a regional as well as an international level in the Middle Ages. Unlike modern industrial confrontations, however, the element of "class consciousness" seems to have been entirely lacking in fourteenth-century Montpellier. Any attempt to use "class" in this context as an instrument of analysis is doomed to failure, although historians of the medieval peasantry might take issue with Rogowski's claim that "none of the modern senses of the word class have any relevance prior to the 19th century". At Montpellier, the social conflict was not waged between groups sharing common economic interests, nor was it generally ignited by state intervention in the shape of royal

doctors who sat on the council of the royal seneschal of Beaucaire-Nîmes were very largely local men, and acted both as members of royal commissions and as private arbitrators in the settlement of disputes. Their decisions seem normally to have been accepted as binding by the parties involved, suggesting that there was little or no attempt to enforce the alien customs of the North upon this region at this time. Above all, the crown possessed inadequate military resources to impose its will, and the notion of "self-government at the king's (nominal) command" would apply well to the lower Languedoc, as it would to Aquitaine, during the hundred years between 1250 and 1350.

Rogowski has a refreshingly original mind, and he fearlessly attacks traditional assumptions and received impressions about the development of the French state. Indeed, he claims in a rather ambiguous passage that the state "does not... exist today", because it is embodied only in a corps of officials acting in its name but serving their own interests — perhaps a somewhat narrow and cynical view. He rightly observes, however, that an increasing state bureaucracy "does not automatically increase the direct authority of the central government." The ramshackle apparatus of what was to become the *ancien régime* cuts a sorry figure beside the theorists' visions of a mystical body, held together by the moral authority of the ruler. The inadequacy of royal government in both the Languedoc and the South-West of France at this time provides a salutary reminder that studies which move outward from Paris into the regions can have a distorting effect. Permanent taxation for the kingdom's defence, for example, was regarded as unacceptable at Montpellier, and the partitioning of liberties of nobles and communes took precedence over abstract notions of loyalty to the crown.

Dr. Rogowski has brought a welcome realism to the study of later medieval French law, government and society, soundly based on the primary sources. He writes in the best tradition of that group of American scholars inspired by the writings and teaching of J. R. Strayer (who contributes a Foreword). His book deserves a wide

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circulation who sat on the council of the royal seneschal of Beaucaire-Nîmes were very largely local men, and acted both as members of royal commissions and as private arbitrators in the settlement of disputes. Their decisions seem normally to have been accepted as binding by the parties involved, suggesting that there was little or no attempt to enforce the alien customs of the North upon this region at this time. Above all, the crown possessed inadequate military resources to impose its will, and the notion of "self-government at the king's (nominal) command" would apply well to the lower Languedoc, as it would to Aquitaine, during the hundred years between 1250 and 1350.

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